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# Wild and Wonderful: Stories and Stereotypes of 19th through 21st Century West Virginia and Appalachia

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**Wild and Wonderful:  
Stories and Stereotypes of 19th through 21st Century  
West Virginia and Appalachia**

**By Rachel Puelle**

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Secondary Thesis Advisor: Micki McElya

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*To Pap,  
May we all be as curious as you.*

## Acknowledgments

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### **How it all began**

Thanksgiving is the holiday that my family spends with all of my mom's nuclear family, the Shaffers. Of course, since my mother's marriage, and the marriages of all of her sisters, the family actually consists of Puelles (my sisters and parents), Grafs, Gaylors, and Sommerfelds. The only "Shaffers" left are my grandparents, Grandma and Pap. On Thanksgiving, my mom and her three sisters, their husbands, kids, pets, and their parents all get together to eat a homemade and traditional American dinner complete with turkey, gravy, stuffing, mashed potatoes, green beans, cranberry sauce, cornbread, and (in contrast to the Pilgrims) macaroni and cheese. In November of 2011, almost done with the first semester of my junior year at UConn, we once again gathered to eat a fantastic meal and catch up on family news.

Since my family lives outside of Maryland, we wake up around five AM every Thanksgiving morning to beat the traffic and make the two and a half hour trip down to the Chesapeake State from my hometown of Flemington, New Jersey. I remember all those Thanksgiving mornings, waking up in the cold and dark, piling into the car, barely staying awake, and dreaming of the meal that was still hours away. My grandparents, who spend about half their year in West Virginia, also make the journey so they can be with all the kids, cousins, aunts, and uncles under one roof. Dinner is usually scheduled for around two or three in the afternoon, so when my dad pulls into my grandparents' driveway at 7:30 in the morning, there is ample time to catch up with Grandma and Pap before heading over to my Aunt Trudy's house for the big meal. My mom, sisters, and I try to convince Grandma that we can help in the kitchen, but she usually has an operation going on and we only get in the way. My dad and Pap go to the grocery store and buy whatever has been forgotten during previous errands. Occasionally we all take a nap while the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade plays on the TV in the background. It is a nice relaxing way to start a day that will later be filled with the chaos of thirty people all talking at once.

Last year, after the initial hugs and greetings, I sat down on my grandparent's porch. Grandma was chopping vegetables with my mom in the kitchen, my dad was reading through one of

Pap's train magazines, Margaret and Becca were asleep somewhere (probably on the living room couch), and I was talking to Pap. I sat on the floor, playing with Snickers, Pap and Grandma's adorable white mutt.

Pap looked down from his chair and asked me "Have you ever heard of John Charles Freemont Dayton Beatty?"

"I don't think so..." I strained my brain trying to remember if I had heard that long name before. It sounded royal, all those fancy names rolled into one, and I tried to place it in American history. The seconds passed by and Snickers gave me a face that made me think even he had heard of John Charles Freemont Dayton Beatty. I felt a bit guilty and asked, "Is he famous?"

"You're related to him!" Pap leaned back, satisfied that he stumped me, ready to tell the story about Charles Freemont Dayton Beatty. "How about Henry Clay Beatty? Lincoln Willis Lafayette Beatty?" He smiled as he showed off.

"Nope. They have great names though!" Most of my relatives are named after figures in the Bible (myself and my sister Rebecca, my cousins Luke and Noah, Pap's ancestors Samuel and Moses), and these men, so obviously named after American politicians, took me by surprise.

"Well, Henry Clay Beatty was your great-great-great grandfather. He had two sons: Lincoln Willis Lafayette Beatty and Charles Freemont Dayton Beatty, your great-great grandfather. Charles<sup>1</sup> was my mother's father. Let me tell you about him. He left her all his money in a will that we have never found" Pap began, excited to be sharing this bit of family lore with me. He was always doing that, dropping hints and clues about some crazy person we were related to in some distant way, or talking about his parents or aunts and uncles and how they supported each other. Pap did not normally just sit down and tell a story, but he liked to talk about his parents and relatives. Slowly, as I got old enough to remember all the different accounts and histories that Pap told, I began to have these images in my head of all these people I had never met. Everyone was from West Virginia, and everyone was a character. No one from back then was anything like anyone I knew growing up in New Jersey. Pap seemed to know this, and he liked to shock us with details that we would never believe.

“You see,” he continued, getting into his stride, “Charles was not an upstanding kind of man. He had about three wives, and he was bad with money, always getting into debt. My mother was his favorite, but not a lot of people in the family liked him too much. According to Mom, he did not get along with Henry very well. At some point in his life, Charles Freemont Beatty had all this land that he owned and he decided to sell all the timber from it. Mom told me that he had upwards of 400 acres worth of timber. He got a huge profit back then.” Pap’s voice is soft, with a strong West Virginia mountain accent. It sounds just like the landscape of the mountains looks like; lilts and tones that go up and down in a rhythm that is wonderful to hear. It is hard for me to describe, but his voice has this great sharing quality in it. He speaks and what he says is supposed to be listened to, it has this quality that sucks you in. He once told me that the Shaffer family had a tradition of storytelling. He remembers listening to his uncles and his father for hours at family gatherings, and he must have picked up their pattern of speech. I asked Pap if he remembered any specific stories, and while he did not, he recalled that “there was a lot of laughing. We were always joking around, having fun.” Pap is quick to laugh, and he will frequently ask questions or tell a joke that will make his grandkids pause and think while he chuckles until they understand the punch line.

While listening to him, I tried to picture Charles Beatty. I saw him sitting on a mountainside in West Virginia, alone, surrounded by trees ready to be cut down. He was tall and strong as the valuable spruce trees around him. In my mind, he was drinking something, like most folk in West Virginia tales. Charles Beatty, I would later find out, was born in 1860, and owned land in the late 1890s (after his first marriage). West Virginia was still a kind of “frontier” back then, and people lived on the land. During his lifetime, Charles Beatty would have heard, perhaps even met, crusaders from the North coming into the region to “save” the inhabitants from poverty. There would have been a “discovery” of the traditions in the mountains. If it was not the reformers, the coal and timber companies came and tried to mine the life out of the mountains and cut forests down for all they were worth.<sup>2</sup>

Charles would have been asked to face these new forces, and I imagined him as a guy who preferred to make his own luck and ignored outsiders as long as he could. This rough and tumble



version of my ancestors made sense to me, and it was supported by the details Pap remembered. Charles, by having his own farm, should have been able to maintain himself without too much worry about finances.<sup>3</sup> While looking through a bunch of old family records after this particular Thanksgiving, I found a picture of Charles. In the photo his hair is dark and clean cut, he has a large mustache but no beard, and is well dressed and groomed. He is about 30 years old in the picture, and it looks to be a professional photo, one that he could use to promote himself in a business or election. In contrast, the only surviving picture of Henry Clay Beatty, Charles's father, shows a man with a huge beard, long hair, and an incredibly stern (read: disapproving) face. His clothes are worn and meant for work. He looks to be about 60 in his photograph. This was a man nobody messed with.<sup>4</sup>

"The problem is we never found the money. He told my mother that she would be 'taken care of' for the rest of her life, but his will was never found and neither was the money. You think you could find it?" Pap winked at me. Our family, suddenly the beneficiaries of a windfall of buried treasure. "It's somewhere in the mountains. It's there," Pap leaned back, rocking in his recliner.

Pap was born on December 1, 1928 in Terra Alta, West Virginia. For the first 8 years of his life, he grew up on his grandfather's farm, a piece of land that was about 150 acres in size. After a bit of a farm version of "musical chairs" where Pap, his older brother, and his parents moved between family farms, the Great Depression hit and Pap's mother and father, Jessie and Rufus Shaffer, retreated to what would be their smallest farm. This farm, located on Briery Mountain in a community called the Whetsell settlement, would be Pap's home until he got a job at a steel mill in Baltimore in the mid 1950s.<sup>5</sup> He would return to the "Hill House," as it is called in my family, after his retirement and the death of his mother in the early 1990s. He lived a life of subsistence farming. Cows roamed freely while his mother worked in her garden and his father occupied several jobs in the community. In 1953 at the age of 25, three years after being drafted and deployed to Korea for the war, he returned to the US to become a steel worker in Baltimore. For a year, he traveled between Baltimore and Terra Alta to court my grandmother (whose family was also rooted in the West Virginia mountains). They got married in June of 1957 and settled down in Maryland. The

next year, they had my mother, Rose, and shortly after her three sisters. Life was not easy, but it could be a lot worse. Jessie remembered her father's words at his death, and retold the story Pap had just told me over and over, reminiscing over lost wealth. Could my family have been rich? How would life have been different?

Pap's curiosity and passion about his family's history was infectious. Pap finished his story and as Snickers left me to investigate some dropped food in the kitchen, I realized that I wanted to know about my family too. I had been listening to Pap talk about all these people that I barely knew, year after year, yet they seemed so important and relevant. Why did these ancestors make the decisions they did? How were their lives shaped by how and where they grew up and lived? Why did they continue to tell these stories year after year? Lastly, why had Pap singled me out to bestow this knowledge and this desire to learn about the family? Grandma called for help in the kitchen, and as Pap got up out of his chair I decided that I would center my thesis project on my family roots in West Virginia. Maybe I would discover that buried treasure. I was prepared to find out.

## **Early History: Stereotypes, Mountaineers, and Reformers**

Like my family, my friends from high school in New Jersey and I have a tradition of getting together on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. Even though we spread across the country to various colleges, large and small, public and private, we make sure to return to Flemington (our hometown is halfway between Philly and New York), and reunite at least once a year. This past November (a full year after Pap told me about Henry Clay and Charles Freemont) was likely the last time for such a gathering, seeing that we were all seniors about to graduate and go on to do who-knows-what in who-knows-where. Rather than acknowledge that fact and the anxieties of an uncertain future, we talked about the present and focused on our current research and studies. One of my friends, a Chemistry major at the University of Pittsburgh, asked what I had done over the summer. My reply that I had spent two weeks in West Virginia apparently sent him into shock, “West Virginia? Why would you go there?”

Ignoring his reaction, I explained, “I am doing my senior thesis on the family stories and general history of West Virginia and Appalachia. My family is from West Virginia. We can trace our ancestry back to Morgan Morgan, considered by many to be the first white settler in the region.” This is a story I have become accustomed to telling often and with pride.

“I didn’t know you were a hillbilly!” he exclaimed. As my friend put his drink down on the table, he looked at me with an expression that betrayed his amusement. “I had no idea!” he replied, and soon he was dredging up every single hillbilly joke or story he had ever heard. Was everyone in the West Virginia town from which my parents and grandparents came related to one another? Were my male kin “mountain men” with long disheveled beards? It seemed impossible for him to conceive that I, a suburban New Jersey-ite who played classical violin and was famous among my friends for knowing all the Academy Award winners in recent years, derived however distantly, from “rednecks.” Had I told my friend that I was black, he would have been just as surprised, especially given my pale and freckled complexion. Yet, he surely would not have indulged the derogatory language and negative images he felt free to associate with people in Appalachia. One unpleasant

stereotype after another flowed from him for several minutes without stopping. For a while I pondered whether any of my forebears were “hillbillies.” Then I wondered if it mattered.

In the course of my research, I have encountered harsh stereotypes of Appalachia and West Virginia time and time again. There was a trip to the dentist, where, before calling me in, a hygienist told another patient “You need to brush your teeth more. Otherwise, you will lose them and look like a hillbilly!” And the conversation with the IT technician at UConn last semester who, upon overhearing my research topic, told me “You don’t want to go to West Virginia. It’s bad down there.”<sup>6</sup> And the national news story that made the rounds on the internet reporting that the West Virginia University mascot (a student dressed as a mountaineer) used the same musket he fired at football games to shoot and kill a black bear, a weapon that most students and supporters did not realize actually functioned as its 19<sup>th</sup> century creators intended. Reports said nothing about this being a school tradition among mascots, or that no university or state laws were broken.<sup>7</sup> Another high school friend of mine insisted I should watch the documentary produced by the same creative minds behind MTV’s *Jackass* series. *The Wild and Wonderful Whites of West Virginia* (2009) presents the story of the supposedly last of a “dying breed of outlaws” in a long American tradition.<sup>8</sup> The Whites, a clan with a convoluted and confusing lineage whose members fall victim to arrests and accidents, drug busts and abuse, generation after generation, are depicted as a once powerful group turned an unhappy family gone to ruin.

Another MTV brainchild, the “reality” show *Buckwild*, presents the most recent image of mountain life in West Virginia’s creeks and hollers. Following the same formula as the smash hit *Jersey Shore* (yes, I hail from the two states in the country whose subcultures of shallow and out-of-control youth have captured national attention), *Buckwild* documents young men and women going about their lives in the southwestern West Virginia town of Sissonville, right outside Charleston the state capital. True to stereotype, the “stars” spend their days drinking beer, hunting, muddin’ (driving trucks through deep mud), shooting potatoes into the air with homemade potato guns, and being loud and irresponsible. Far from shrinking from the negative publicity, the cast takes pride in its country roots. To them, this means four-wheeling and endless partying, not working long hours

on the farm or in the mine like their forebears.<sup>9</sup> West Virginia's public officials were not amused with this representation of their state, and a few tried to pressure the network into canceling the series.<sup>10</sup> Given the long history of popular stereotyping of Appalachia, this was a losing battle.<sup>11</sup> In the twenty-first century, the old stereotypes of West Virginians as gun happy, reckless, and lawless idiots with few teeth and even fewer prospects are alive and well in popular culture.

Why are such stereotypes, never true depictions at any time and utterly anachronistic today, still around? None describe my family. Well, almost none. Once, while enjoying a local pancake breakfast in Kingwood, WV, Pap identified at least a quarter of the those present as kin. And what about the numerous pictures of great-great grandfathers, uncles, and cousins in the family albums, many of them "mountain men" with long and unruly beards? And there is that old bathtub – a former cow trough – sitting outside in the yard of my grandparents' house full of clear water and pond scum. To the many who accept Appalachian stereotypes without question, these are prime examples of an ignorant hillbilly culture. But those things don't mean anything, right? If anything, they are a measure of outsiders' own ignorance.

The difficulty of fighting these models of Appalachian behavior is that, like most controlling images, they have some (however slight) basis in fact. Historical motifs in West Virginia like the stoic frontiersman or the loyal, fighting feudist have fed the imagination of people beyond the region in the worst possible way. Behavior taken out of context reduces an incredibly vibrant and varied region to a few insulting stories and archetypes. These hackneyed images of violence, laziness, and ignorance have been around so long they have glued themselves to the region. Despite their misleading and exaggerated claims about West Virginians' lives, they continue to inflict hardship and strife one generation after another.

But West Virginians are not defenseless against this relentless onslaught. They possess an arsenal of family stories by which to counter the demeaning and often false tales told by outsiders. Family stories that either explain behavior, for example why it makes sense to own dozens of guns, or embrace the independence exhibited by less-than-savory actions like "muddin'." These stories have allowed West Virginians to build a collective identity, rooted in the past, of which they can be

proud. Recounting comedies, dramas, and epics of hardworking relatives, intelligent and courageous ancestors, eccentric and mischievous troublemakers, and innovative communities lifts families out of the quagmire of controlling images forced on them by outsiders.

The myth of the Appalachian as an independent, gun-toting freelancer originated with the very first peopling of the area by westerners. Of course, thousands of years before the first Europeans visited what would become the American continent, native populations lived in the area. The most prominent indigenous populations in West Virginia were Native American mound builders, creators of large earthen mounds to honor important tribal members at their death. Anthropologists and historians have found it hard to identify specific groups because the passing of centuries, weather, and human destruction have destroyed many of the artifacts and mounds associated with them. Large numbers of Native Americans were in the area, but by the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, as European settlers were making their way slowly into the interior of North America, other tribes (including those included in what would become the Iroquois confederation) took over the trade of the area and forced less powerful populations to move out. As a result, the first European settlers to enter the Appalachians met very few native peoples. The small remnants of Native Americans in the original encounter were most likely members of the Monongahela and Susquehannock cultures.<sup>12</sup> Gradually, the stronghold of the Iroquois confederation weakened and a mixture of different tribes returned to the mountains. The growing Native American population paralleled the growing presence of Europeans. For better or worse, the two populations interacted with increasing frequency over the eighteenth century. In spite of the Native American presence, the Appalachian myth typically does not include mention of the mountains' very first inhabitants. The origins of most stories start at the establishment of the first western settlements and mention nothing of the dynamic changes of Native American populations. The frontier myth is entirely centered on the heroism of the first white Europeans.

Because the region was so isolated and inhospitable in those early days, only the most adventurous and independent pioneer, or the craziest and most foolhardy explorer ventured out and made a living in the mountains. These hardy men and women were not afraid to hunt for their

subsistence, employ guns for the protection of their families, and were prepared to live in crude and uncomfortable conditions far from neighbors and assistance in times of trouble. Fur traders were the first Europeans in the area, traveling beyond the coast in the early 1700s. Rather than settle down, traders preferred to make their living shuttling back and forth between the more developed areas of Virginia and the Appalachian Mountains. As more people came to these new colonies, they pushed west into the more rugged areas of the territory in quest of land. This desire drove westerners to forcibly take the land from the Native Americans. Not surprisingly, native populations were furious with this European encroachment, and did all in their power to keep their land. The intensity with which Indians fought against these white invaders added to the new settlers' challenges of creating communities in the inhospitable terrain. Westerners in the area adopted the tactic of harsh resistance against the local Indian tribes, perhaps with greater ferocity than in other British colonies because of a lack of reinforcements or resources nearby. Despite the environment and local population's opposition, German and other European immigrants established the area's first settlements as early as 1727.<sup>13</sup>

My family dates back to those early settlers. It is part of a bloodline connecting us to Morgan Morgan, who, legend says, was the first white man to enter the wilderness of western Virginia and carve out a living. But, it turns out, the legend is false. Evidence shows that he was living in Delaware in 1729, two years after the establishment of the German settlement of Mecklenburg (now in West Virginia) and did not acquire land in the mountain region until 1730.<sup>14</sup> The facts notwithstanding, my family is not the first or only clan in the area to propagate this claim, and they still feel a certain pride in their connection to this regional hero. If not the first settler, Morgan Morgan was perhaps the most distinguished. After immigrating to North America from Wales around 1712, Morgan was an active public figure in the early colony of Delaware. As French Morgan, a biographer, distant descendent, and man who shared my passion for family history (but no relation) noted, "Morgan was not of the 'common herd' but moved among higher strata." Morgan Morgan had risen through the ranks and orders of Delaware society, reaching his peak as a confidante to the Lieutenant Governor. They were close enough that he came to be an executor of

the Lieutenant Governor's will in 1717.<sup>15</sup> According to both legend and fact, Morgan was a successful merchant, manager of a large farm, and natural leader among men. As a colonist in western Virginia, he drew many settlers to him. His leadership led to the founding of the first permanent white settlement in 1731, with a sturdy church of Morgan's creation at its center.<sup>16</sup> But by far the best gift Morgan would bestow on the future state of West Virginia was his numerous offspring. Several of his sons (including Zackquill Morgan, through whom my ancestry follows<sup>17</sup>) went on to found key settlements in the state, defend the territory against attack, and govern its people.

According to local lore, the Morgans were the pinnacle of the adventurous frontiersmen and women embracing the new American frontier. They were able to live happily in an environment that often required an active lifestyle and dangerous deeds to ensure safety and food. The Morgans were not the first people in the area, but they left a significant legacy. Leading towns and protecting local citizens ensured that they would be remembered for generations. They were not afraid of hard work and frequently stepped up as responsible protectors of the scattered European landowners, as did Zackquill and his brothers in valiant service during the French and Indian War of the late 1750s.<sup>18</sup> Legend goes that one of these brothers, Levi, was a spy who used such tactics as hiding in hollow trees in order to learn what the Native American tribes were planning to do next. His expert marksmanship and commitment to learning as much as he could about the enemy endeared him to his fellow white inhabitants. While violently opposing the local population of Native Americans did nothing to make the Morgans popular with the original inhabitants of the mountains, protecting fellow Europeans from the frequent Indian raids glorified them in the eyes of colonists who could not defend themselves.<sup>19</sup> West Virginians look past the devastating campaigns led by the Morgans against native populations because these men were responsible for their continued survival. After the French and Indian War, Zackquill earned the title Colonel (like his father) and fought in the Revolution, leading other Appalachian men in the struggle against the British. After the war, Col. Zackquill founded "Morgan's Town" in 1785, whose streets were planned with the help of fellow leader and friend in the Revolution, George Washington. This settlement became Morgantown, one



of West Virginia's largest cities, the site of West Virginia University, and forever linking the Morgan name to the land.<sup>20</sup>

Nothing made any of Appalachia's white occupants prouder than news of daring deeds and heroic leadership by kin of the Morgan family. I have a lot of trouble writing the history of early settlement in western Virginia because I do not know how I feel about my ancestors. While I am certainly glad that they were able to survive, have families, and have descendants that would lead to my eventual existence, their treatment of the indigenous population is in many ways reprehensible. Family stories focus on the frontier myth and protection gained from heroes like Morgan Morgan. They ignore the taking of Native American land and killing of Native American families. Is it fair for me, from a different time and place, to judge them? As far as legend goes within my family and others in the West Virginia and Appalachia area, frontier mythology is much more prominent than the tale of English invasion. So, those are the stories that are told and retold. No one remembers (or talks about) great-great uncle so-in-so who ruthlessly slaughtered an entire Native American family for no reason. They do remember the Morgans and their sons because they fought strategically and skillfully to keep new settlements in existence. At least, that is the version of history that is remembered.

At the Shaffer family reunion I attended this summer the presiding officer passed around an article about a new statue commemorating Morgan Morgan.<sup>21</sup> Attendees who had forgotten, or had never known, about the familial connection to this Appalachian hero were quickly told tale after tale of harrowing rescue, political accomplishment, or proud moment generated by Morgan and his family. I read the article (a small mention in a local newsletter about an up-and-coming artist's recreation of the archetypal image) and could not help feeling the same pride as those around me that an artist had forged my ancestor in metal. Did people outside of the state of West Virginia know or care about the Morgans? My second, third, and fourth cousins, in most cases several times removed, grew up hearing about these brave and courageous men, and considered them to be American heroes. My friend from New Jersey who asked me why I traveled to West Virginia, in

contrast, was incredibly surprised that the Mountain State could even produce such a figure. The myth of Morgan was so contrary to current stereotypes about the people of West Virginia.

As the area became more established in the decades to come after the Morgans' arrival, the disappearance of Native American threats, and the coming of peace, the mythology and image of mountaineers would shift yet again. The dominant image of West Virginia settlers turned from proud protectors to needlessly violent agitators. In decades and centuries to come, the brave mountaineer who used necessary force to protect the defenseless would morph into the bloodthirsty hillbilly who relished a fight for no reason other than the pleasure of physical combat. This image so popular today shares the outline of the Morgan myth but is markedly different. The Morgans did what was necessary to survive. At least, that is the accepted history within my family and others in the area. Were the raids and massacres of native populations the only way for colonists to deal with the Indians? Regardless of the answer, this is certainly not the case with the later "hillbillies," who indulged in gratuitous violence. According to locals, the original settlers of this offshoot of the Virginia colony were people who learned to depend on their own to survive. They did not shy away from obstacles, and were not dependent on help from larger settlements in the eastern parts of the state. Whether or not this was true, people outside the mountains virtually forgot about those braving the isolated terrain for over half a century until their "rediscovery" after the Civil War.

History and folklore about West Virginia skip the eighty or so years between the end of the Revolution and the beginning of the Civil War. This time on the periphery of America between the early 1780s and early 1860s would see the remaking of the exceptional mountaineer into the densest of hillbillies. In 1861, citizens in Appalachia remained loyal to the Union. While Virginia was ready to join the Confederacy, those in western Virginia opted to secede from the Old Dominion and establish their own state under the Constitution. Families in northwestern Virginia did not rely on slavery and were generally poorer than those in the eastern and southern parts of the state. Residents could not bring themselves to fight for a cause they did not benefit from or believe in.<sup>22</sup> In June 1863, in the middle of the Civil War, West Virginia officially deserted the Confederate cause and entered the Union as the thirty-fifth state.<sup>23</sup> That separation expressed the inhabitants'

longstanding sense of distinctiveness from the Piedmont and Tidewater regions of Virginia. The people of the Appalachian Mountains had a different lifestyle, depended on different resources, and wanted a government that would look out for their unique interests, including continued trade with northern states and economic policies that would make competition with large, slave-based plantations feasible. Secession made their “otherness” concrete. In the decades following the Civil War, their distinctness as a region and people would become even greater. As technology allowed for easier transportation into western territories, migrants skipped over the mountains and headed farther into America’s interior. Growth slowed to a trickle in Appalachia, and the image of West Virginia as “other” took root.

For the more adventurous, that very differentness of the mountain region proved attractive. In the decades after the Civil War, Appalachia beckoned to tourists eager to see new sites and unusual people. Travel writers popularized the mountain range not only for its scenery but also for its naïve and seemingly “foreign” inhabitants. To visitors, locals appeared eccentric with their peculiar clothing, often squalid living conditions, and nearly incomprehensible speech. Once praised for their rugged individualism, the mountain dwellers were now condemned for their ignorance and slovenliness.<sup>24</sup> Will Wallace Harney, a popular magazine contributor of the time, published an essay in *Lippincott’s Magazine* in October of 1873 describing the exotic flora and fauna (including the people) in this part of the country. His travels took him mainly to the highland areas of Tennessee where he enthusiastically recorded minute details of the mountains, their crags and cliffs, and the rivers and roads twisting and turning in the most ingenious ways to transport him and others through rural and picturesque scenery.<sup>25</sup> Much more fantastic than the natural world were the folk living in the hollows and hills:

The natives of this region are characterized by marked peculiarities of the anatomical frame. The elongation of the bones, the contour of the facial angle, the relative proportion or disproportion of the extremities, the loose muscular attachment of the ligatures, and the harsh features were exemplified in the notable instance of the late President Lincoln.<sup>26</sup>

The similarity to Lincoln's notorious looks was no compliment. In the midst of Reconstruction in a country trying to heal itself after a terrible war, Lincoln was a polarizing figure. Readers would have recognized the tongue-in-cheek nature of Harney's description and the negative traits he was sharing about the people he encountered. To Harney, the human inhabitants of the mountain were animalistic, with their gangly limbs and strange looking faces. Their lifestyle of hunting and working outside in the wilderness related them to the bears and deer that lived around them. These were people descended from many of the same lineages of people in the northeast, but poverty and isolation had distorted them into alien and unrecognizable beings. Worse still, the locals were ignorant and suspicious. Farmers "believe in the influence of the moon on all vegetation, and in pork-butcher and curing the same luminary is consulted... A change in the moon forebodes a change of the weather, and no meteorological statistics can shake their confidence in superstition. They, of course, believe in the water wizard and his forked wand."<sup>27</sup> Folk beliefs that had fallen out of favor in other parts of the country were still going strong in the mountains. The citizens of Tennessee, West Virginia and other mountainous states were, in comparison to the rest of the United States, well behind in their energy and intelligence. Harney saw only disfigured and grizzled men and gaunt and weary women in tattered scraps of clothing.

Another travel writer, James Lane Allen, made many of the same observations that Harney made, but began a trend of noticing the positive qualities in the people of the mountains, not the negative ones. Traveling in Kentucky in the mid 1880s, he, and others like him, believed that the culture encountered in the mountains was a pure culture unlike any other throughout the United States. An aspiring writer and native of Kentucky, Allen was told that in order to establish himself as a professional and make it big, he should concentrate on a "definite field" as the centerpiece for his stories and observations. Allen decided nothing was better than his home state, and he decided to venture into the areas around his hometown of Lexington and record the "local color" he encountered.<sup>28</sup> His main observation was that within Kentucky were two distinct and contrasting states. One was blue-grass country, the other the eastern mountains.<sup>29</sup> Occupants of the former were worldly and sophisticated, like the gentry of other Southern states. In contrast, those in the

eastern hollers and hills were backward and simple, lacking education and refinement. But, in compensation for these faults, they were innocent and reminiscent of a time long ago. Allen was astonished to encounter one mountaineer who had never seen bananas; upon seeing a bunch of the fruit at a local store, the old-timer exclaimed: “Blame me if them ain’t the darnedest beans I ever seen!”<sup>30</sup> Appalachia was almost a country of its own. It had its own language, dress, and lifestyle. And thanks to the barrier of the mountains, the region was destined to remain a place apart.

Nearly thirty years later, another visitor to the region, Ellen Churchill Semple, observed almost exactly the same phenomenon. Her words highlight the same features and the same physical differentness Harney and Allen witnessed decades earlier, but, as a scholar (not an entertainment writer like Harney and Allen), her language conveys many more layers about the motivations and attitudes of her subjects:

The men are tall and lank, though sinewy, with thin bony faces, sallow skins, and dull hair. They hold themselves in a loose-jointed way: their shoulders droop in walking and sitting. Their faces are immobile, often inscrutable, but never stupid... The faces of the women are always delicately moulded and refined, with an expression of dumb patience telling of the heavy burden which life has laid upon them. They are absolutely simple, natural, and their child-like unconsciousness of self points to their long residence away from the gaze of the world. Their manners are gentle, gracious, and unembarrassed, so that in talking with them one forgets their bare feet, ragged clothes, and crass ignorance.<sup>31</sup>

Three decades apart, Semple, Harney, and Allen made remarkably similar comments about locals’ appearances. But Semple went beyond the physical and tried to analyze the behavior, attitude, and condition of her subjects. She saw the trying life of women, leading perhaps to their solemn behavior, and wanted her readers to see that, although different, mountain people were people too. Yet, Harney like Semple, found qualities to admire in the people of the mountains. Despite their outward appearance and lack of education, locals charmed visitors with their quaintness and backwoods ways. Many were friendly and kind. Their speech was quirky and colorful, studded with “we-uns” and “you-uns” and all sorts of colloquial words that “furriners” just did not understand.

Many, including Semple, mistakenly identified their speech as Elizabethan English (the language spoken in the sixteenth century by the likes of William Shakespeare).<sup>32</sup> The contrast to the formal language and strict etiquette of the rest of the country was refreshing. Harney and Semple encountered extremely similar situations, despite the fact that Harney toured Tennessee in 1873 and Semple conducted research in Kentucky in 1901.

Harney's story, with its prominent placement in the widely circulated *Lippincott's Magazine*, opened readers' eyes to an America different from what they were accustomed to seeing. Readers from America's more urban and industrialized parts began to pine for the simplicity of the mountains. Despite its under development, Harney suggested, Appalachia possessed an antique charm and a static feel unlike any other part of the country. His characters were friendly but stupid, kind but superstitious. They evoked a feeling of a time long ago.

Americans living in the cities of the country, learning for the first time of populations falling behind in the march of progress, felt a need to do two things for their mountain dwelling brethren. First, they wanted to educate and improve the lives of these unfortunate and uncivilized people. Newcomers were shocked by the ramshackle houses, men senseless from moonshine, and unruly children running around wildly. In their opinion, all that was needed to help these poor people out of their dejection were a few good schools and churches. The region was desperately in need of a proper American education.<sup>33</sup> Second, reformers wanted to preserve the charm and innocence that many mountain natives evoked. When they were not drinking moonshine or hunting coon dogs, mountaineers supposedly preserved an authentic lifestyle that a quickly industrializing and urban America had lost. William Goodell Frost, eager to draw students to Berea College in Kentucky where he was president from 1892 to 1920, noted that the residents of the region had been stuck in a "Rip Van Winkle sleep" and had simply missed out on commercial development.<sup>34</sup> Frost's use of the term "Appalachian America" and his emphasis on isolated pockets of culture within mountain territory, disseminated in his March 1899 article in *The Atlantic Monthly*, solidified the ever-growing popular opinion of Appalachian people. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, *The Atlantic Monthly* had become the epitome of literary magazines in the United States, and "had established itself as the

premier organ of literary high culture in America.”<sup>35</sup> Educated and privileged readers accepted stories found in the *Atlantic* as true. The locals whom Frost portrayed used kerosene lamps instead of electric lights, and bought goods from neighborhood stores rather than venture to populous cities and towns. But, Frost suggested, their behavior was not a character defect. Instead, it was a product of isolation within the mountains.<sup>36</sup> His Appalachia is a culture frozen in time, in urgent need of preservation.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were a period when America was witnessing dramatic shifts in demographics due to immigration mostly from eastern Europe. Amongst worries of the introduction of foreign cultures, pockets of truly Anglo-Saxon stock were more and more attractive, even if they had no electricity and lived in the woods. In other words, at least mountaineers spoke English (even if it sounded a bit funny), and they were inarguably white. Scholars believed that it was more imperative than ever for mountain culture to be preserved at this moment in American history. As the United States became more industrialized, immigrants from all over Europe and other countries came looking for factory and other industrial jobs.<sup>37</sup> At this time, Appalachia was not experiencing the same kinds of industrial development, and therefore was not drawing the same numbers of immigrants from the same countries that many in America found undesirable. While many Americans began to use different categories than simply skin color to distinguish inhabitants, Appalachians remained pure and simple.<sup>38</sup> It was imperative that their cultural identity be preserved and unchanged. Ironically, for all the fear that Appalachian culture would be lost, Frost’s observations of behavior match those of Harney who “discovered” mountain people nearly 30 years earlier. It appeared to outsiders that Appalachian culture had remained unchanged for decades.

Music, particularly the singing of ballads, and creating homemade goods were parts of West Virginian and Appalachian culture that other Americans wanted to take note and preserve for the future. One of the most famous figures in the movement, but by no means the first to enter the mountains, was Olive Dame Campbell. Before marrying John C. Campbell in 1907, her partner throughout travels and research on folk schools and traditions, the New England native received a

degree from Tufts University in Boston. After a trip to Scotland where she met her husband, the two won a grant in 1909 to learn about rural education in Scandinavia, where the growing practice of establishing “folk schools” (schools designed to teach traditions and crafts specific to rural regions) were very successful in reaching out to previously illiterate and isolated populations.<sup>39</sup> Following her husband and the grant to study the folk school movement in Europe, Campbell eagerly traveled thousands of miles across Europe, then the United States, particularly down the east coast and into the Appalachian Mountains to set up folk schools, listen to, and record ballads. Campbell worked harder than many who had come before her most to understand the people of the region. Song collectors who came before her had studied Appalachian people as if they were specimens. Unlike these earlier researchers who regarded the inhabitants of Appalachia as if they were an alien species, Campbell treated her subjects with respect, in the conviction they were carrying on a lost way of life. The songs, ballads, and practices that Campbell recorded between 1908 and 1920 belonged to an unadulterated and unspoiled America.<sup>40</sup> Thanks to Campbell’s influence, scholars came to the mountains, drawn by the dozen to listen to, record, and preserve the proud inhabitants’ traditional songs and singing.<sup>41</sup> Locals were amazed that outsiders took such an interest in them. Unfortunately, these outsiders perpetuated the idea of rural Appalachia as “other” for decades by design. Teachers in folk schools and researchers recording ballads often forced their subjects or students to conform to their preconceived notions how mountain dwellers should act. The locals, in their minds, were traditional folk (even when they were not) and they ought to conform to type. The irony was lost on the reformers, who invented and encouraged new “traditions” based on misconceptions about the region and its people. As a result, people from outside Appalachia shaped its culture, rather than those from within.<sup>42</sup>

One of the main reasons for the declining reputation of the native West Virginian was the nearly forty-year feud between the Hatfields and the McCoys, families who lived across the river from each other along the borders of West Virginia and Kentucky in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Compared to where my family settled in northeastern Preston County, the Hatfields and McCoys lived in the opposite corner of the state. Hundreds of miles of land, mountains, and rivers separate



Preston from Logan County in southwestern WV and Pike County in northeastern Kentucky. Nevertheless, the reputation of all West Virginians seems shaped by the men and women in this feud and follows my family and their neighbors wherever they go. The Hatfield/McCoy feud is one of the best-known and damaging instances in West Virginia history in terms of making citizens of the state seem caricatured, violent, and ruthless. Numerous versions of the decades long fight, with its frequent brawls, lawsuits, and coverage in newspapers all over the country, have made this event (an event dealing with the tiniest fraction of West Virginia and Kentucky's population) the only thing many have ever heard about Appalachia. Because of the nature and cultural appeal of the story, as well as family history and loyalties involved in the telling and retellings, nothing is more characteristic of how the rest of the country views Appalachia than this one bloody and often outrageous feud.

A story involving shootin', drinkin' moonshine, vigilante justice, forbidden love, executions, and constant evading of the law in a 19<sup>th</sup> century progenitor of MTV's *Buckwild* made the Hatfields and the McCoy's the two most famous families in the country. The two patriarchs, Devil Anse Hatfield and Old Ranel McCoy, ruled the Tug Valley through their influence over their families and numerous business ventures involving farming, timber, and dealing in moonshine. Scholars summarize the events of the feud in many different ways. Because of the inaccuracy of historical records, differing accounts of memory, miscommunications, and more, there are many timelines of the feud with varying events included or omitted. For the purpose of this paper, I will be following the timeline and events as outlined by Altina Waller in her acclaimed book *Feud: Hatfields, McCoy's, and Social Change in Appalachia, 1860-1900*. While there are dozens of works on the subject, Waller's, written in great part while she was a professor at WVU, is one of the most extensively researched and cited by other historians on the subject. She outlines the events in the feud as follows:

1. In 1865, Asa Harmon McCoy was shot dead in a cave. Legend attributes his murder to either Devil Anse or his uncle Jim Vance who disapproved of Asa's Union loyalties during the Civil War. Waller includes this incident, but says that it is not likely the real cause of widespread feuding because of the 13 years between the murder and the next events.

2. In 1878, Old Ranel accused Floyd Hatfield, Devil's cousin, of stealing his hog. He filed a complaint and a trial ensued in McCoy-friendly Kentucky with a jury of 6 Hatfields and 6 McCos. Ranel lost because a McCoy on the jury sided with the Hatfields.
3. Angered over the outcome of the trial nearly a year and a half earlier, Sam and Paris McCoy attacked and killed a Hatfield witness in 1880. The Hatfields file to have the two McCos arrested. On trial, this time in WV, the McCos are acquitted on the grounds that they were acting in self-defense.
4. In that same year on an election day Roseanna McCoy, Ranel's daughter, and Johnse Hatfield, Devil's son, fell in love. In a plot to rival Romeo and Juliet, the two lovers continued their relationship despite threats from their parents. Roseanna saved Johnse from a McCoy-planned ambush, but still could not convince Devil to let his son marry her. Roseanna, pregnant with Johnse's baby, was sent to live with an aunt. The infant died. Later, Devil (for unknown reasons) allowed Johnse to marry Roseanna's cousin, Nancy McCoy.
5. On another election day not long after, Ellison Hatfield, Devil's brother, was stabbed and shot by three McCos. The McCos were arrested and both families wait to see if Ellison would survive, the fate of the three sitting in jail in the balance. When Ellison finally died, Devil took the law into his own hands, assembled a posse, captured the three McCos, and executed them.
6. After these executions, Ranel and others in Kentucky had warrants placed for Devil and his followers. Poses of bounty hunters and McCoy supporters frequently crossed the river from Kentucky into West Virginia and tracked down Hatfield supporters and arrested them.
7. In 1888, on New Years Day, Hatfield supporters attacked the McCoy home. The Hatfields burned the house and killed two of Ranel's children. They then beat Ranel's wife, Sally, for trying to reach her dying daughter Alifair in the snow.

8. Outraged by the New Year's attack, Frank Phillips and other McCoy supporters attacked and killed Jim Vance. A few days later several feuders died at the Battle of Grapevine Creek.<sup>43</sup>

After these events, the violent episodes of the feud ended, but the lawsuits, trials, and arrests continued. Journalists from all over the country came into the Appalachians, many for the first time, to cover the controversy. Reporters encouraged feudists to brandish and display their weapons in photographs, and staged elaborate scenes for dramatic effect. Eventually, Devil moved his family to a fortress suited to protect them from attacks of any kind. Over time, fighting petered out, but stories and rumors about the "characters" remained strong. When Devil died of pneumonia in 1921, thousands of West Virginians showed up to see this national figure's funeral. Some came out to honor his life while others came to see the spectacle of the final end of the most influential man in the region. In contrast, Ranel died quietly and alone.

So, you may be thinking, what does any of this have to do with my family? To be honest, on a small scale, not that much. As I was researching my family genealogy, I was hoping to find that we were in some way connected to one (maybe both) of the two most famous families in Appalachia, perhaps in the entire country. Alas, I could not find a connection, but I was able to disprove one of the most popular myths about West Virginian families: there are at least a few people in the state to whom I have absolutely no genetic or familial link. But the Hatfield/McCoy feud is worth studying, even without a personal connection, because it exemplifies how Appalachian people dealt with forces from outside the mountains that they had never faced before. The entire period of industrialization, spanning from around 1865 to the early 1920s, was a time when the wealth of natural resources in Appalachia was being discovered by industrialists. When these new populations came into the region, they drastically changed the social dynamic. These forces caused strife between locals and newcomers, added tension between landowners and newly employed wage laborers, and actually caused behavior that would become stereotypical of the region. The first look that many Americans got of Appalachians was one of people scrambling to get used to a completely different lifestyle. The Hatfield/McCoy feud was for many an unfortunate, but influential, first

impression. Popular arguments propose that excessive drinking or special genetic variations in Hatfield and McCoy DNA encouraged violent and irrational behavior, but it is my intention to look at much more convincing and historically relevant economic and land use factors that motivated certain actions, possibly encouraging feuding behavior in this region.<sup>44</sup> Also, because of popular media's hunger for spreading a violent image of Appalachian culture, the Hatfield/McCoy feud has been used time and again to reinforce degrading, unfair, and inaccurate portrayals of people, like my family, living in Appalachia.

A recent interpretation of the famous feud from the creative minds in Hollywood is the History Channel's 2012 miniseries *Hatfields & McCoy's*. The made-for-TV-movie plays up the more interesting characteristics of the feud while playing down the more mundane events. A scene where Asa Harmon McCoy insinuates that Jim Vance fornicates with his dog, or when Devil and Uncle Jim shoot two Union soldiers for no reason at all are included, but there are no scenes of feudists bravely waiting in line and filling out the proper paperwork at the town courthouse. Waller, who spent over a decade looking over faded manuscripts, letters, and photographs dealing with the feud, has some targeted criticism for this most recent portrayal. Immediately after the show aired, Waller wrote in a blog post for the UNC press:

After ten years of research I thought I had clearly laid out what happened and why, at least as far as the historical documents allowed. I tried to cut through the myths and legends associated with this iconic event and bring it into the realm of a documentable historical event... Alas, the latest incarnation of the famous feud as portrayed in the Kevin Costner-produced made-for-TV movie has brought me down to earth with a resounding thump, for here are the old myths and legends fully intact.<sup>45</sup>

While some drifting from reality could be forgiven as Costner fit nearly 40 years of feuding into four hours and fifty minutes of show, Waller's disappointment at the lack of historical accuracy is definitely merited. The show starts off with Ranel McCoy and Devil Anse, best friends, fighting in the same unit during the Civil War. The first rift in their friendship occurs when Devil abandons the army before the end of the war while Ranel stays until the end. There is no evidence that the two

were friends or that they fought together in the war. Devil did desert the army in 1863 and, upon returning, created his own group of fighters designed not so much to support the Union or the Confederacy (he had Confederate leanings), but to keep forces of any kind from disturbing the happenings in his home, the Tug Valley.<sup>46</sup> In the film, after deserting, Devil shoots a few Yankees with his uncle Jim laughing and drunk next to him. Ranel returns home and is furious at Devil's disregard for duty during the war. The two families, following their patriarchs lead, distance themselves. Ranel goes so far as to make sure his wife does not eat a gift of jelly from Devil's wife. In the movie, the historic details are not important. Instead, the attitude and tone of the characters make the plot entertaining and characters engaging. If Devil and Ranel are not friends split apart, it is hard for TV audiences to understand why they are fighting in the first place. Even if that means making them meaner, dumber, drunker, and more vengeful than they were in real life.

I asked my grandfather whether he had seen the miniseries. He is a huge fan of the History channel, and as this particular event was already familiar to him, it was natural that he tune in. But he could not get through the first episode. "It was just too violent," he told me, with a frown and shake of his head. When I sat down to watch (after I had done some research and knew when to expect shootings and murders), I too was thrown by the needless violence. If this was one of the few ways outsiders learn about Appalachian history, it is no wonder that bloodlust is so commonly attributed to mountain people.

The causes of the feud are many and varied, but the rumbling of a crisis approached the mountains before anyone stole a hog or attended an Election Day in a particularly fightin' mood. New trends regarding land ownership in the mid 1800s foreshadowed the later conflicts that would stir many feudists into action. Since its founding, self sufficient farming on land of one's own was essential to a respectable life in the Appalachians. Families lived on large farms, and couples had many children to provide plenty of hands to work on the land. Traditionally, once a son was of age and married, his father would give him a farm (taken from his numerous acres). In the sparsely populated mountain region, this system functioned extremely well throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. But around the time of the Civil War, families started to reach their limits when it came to

dispersing land to their children.<sup>47</sup> Devil Anse, one of 10 children, came up short. His father, disapproving Anse's "devilishness," never allotted him a farm from the family estate. Devil would work extremely hard to gain control of great swaths of the Tug Valley and would eventually succeed, but none was handed to him as it was to sons of previous generations. Mountaineers like Devil Hatfield and Ranel McCoy were used to taking the initiative and forging their own way through life. Their hard work had to compensate for the lack of land and opportunity that generations of Appalachians had enjoyed from the start. Independence and self-sufficiency were two traits that made it particularly hard for mountaineers to adjust to changes after the Civil War. But that was not all. In his bid for independence, Devil used questionable tactics to win land that had McCoy links for his timber business. The two families were "fighting" over the same land way before the feud broke out.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, industrialists, capitalists, and urban companies were slowly encroaching on mountain land. Mountaineers who had previously owned hundreds or thousands of acres of land lost it to outsiders representing corporations. Devil, vulnerable after dealing with bounty hunters and posse's trying to arrest his kinsmen, fell into debt as enemies and companies called in payments he could not afford. He was forced to sell land at a loss. Devil was not the only West Virginian to suffer this problem. The constant need for money would open up more opportunities for companies competing for natural resources to lure mountaineers into their workforces and become wage earners. Years after their land was slowly drained away by large families, heavy taxes imposed by the government, and finally constantly increasing competition between farming, timber, and mining venues, Tug Valley residents became wage laborers, working for the railroad and fuel industries. During the stretch of time between the Civil War and the 1920s, when coal companies would cement their hold on the region, industrialists moved into the mountains and slowly imposed changes on locals ways of life. Strangers from the North treated mountaineers without respect and did not care that the families of the people working low-paying jobs used to control entire towns or mountains.<sup>48</sup> Tales of relatives who were brave, courageous,

and took matters into their own hands (like the Hatfields and McCoys) brought comfort to people who had everything they were proud of (land and independent livelihood) taken away from them.

## The Beattys and the 500-Acre Farm

Remember the two men my grandfather told me about with names like American politicians? Here they are. This is my great-great-grandfather, Henry Clay Beatty. He is my mother's father's mother's father's father, and was born in Preston

County, WV on May 30, 1830. His steely gaze, worn clothes, and rather uncomfortable expression might lead people to believe that this is the stereotypical, rugged mountaineer. Tell me that you cannot see this man with a flask in his hand, hunting in the backwoods of some holler. He looks tough and independent. His expression is one of a man who lived a hard life and did not need help from anyone, thank you very much. It may come as no surprise that Henry, during his lifetime, accomplished a living that allowed him to buy a substantial farm in Preston County. In addition to working the land, Henry



was an official of the Preston County Court system, serving as county commissioner for many years. There is no date associated with the picture, but Henry Clay looks to be in his 60s or 70s, which places the photograph around 1890-1900s. He died on April 10, 1914.

This is my great-great grandfather. He is my mother's father's mother's father, the older of Henry Clay Beatty's two sons. His name was Charles Freemont Beatty, and he was born almost exactly thirty years after his father on May 19, 1860. In contrast to his father's pose, Charles has a serious face, but it shows no signs of discomfort or disapproval. His hair is trimmed, his clothes are





neat and formal, and he is wearing a tie. Few people could view this photograph and see anything but a responsible and successful businessman. He appears to be the kind of person who is efficient and accomplished. Charles was a farmer and, like his father, a short-time County commissioner. Yet, it was Charles's bad decisions that forced the largest plot of land in the family out of Beatty/Shaffer hands. He appears to be roughly 40 years old in his picture, dating it to near 1900, around the same time his father's was taken. He died on October 16, 1925.

I include the pictures of these two men for a couple of reasons. Firstly these pictures have been passed down for decades in family records. While my grandparents have a vast collection of pictures, these two are copied several times and their subjects are identified (a luxury that is not consistent across the collection). Secondly, they are paired together unlike any of the other photographs. Copies place them together, even though they are not the only descendants in the collection. Thirdly, they show incredibly different images of Appalachian men. Both men have the same eyes, but beyond that, there is little that identifies them as father and son. These two pictures taken together show that mountaineers, hillbillies, or whatever you want to call citizens of the Appalachian Mountains, cannot be painted with the same brush. The contrast of Henry to Charles reveals much more than radically different styles of facial hair. Each photograph represents a different personality and attitude of people in West Virginia. Both men offer a glimpse at important aspects of mountain life during the peak of their respective lives, and each would leave a legacy attached to their name for subsequent generations to remember them by.

These two men are connected in Pap's mind despite their differences of personality and influence over the course of his life. While Henry Clay Beatty appears to be the less personable of the two from their photographs, his family remembers him fondly. Pap's mother, Jessie (Henry's granddaughter) adored her grandfather. She took care of him near the end of his life and recorded many notes about his ancestors in her family records. As her son Robert (known as Sam) wrote in a letter to a far-away relative on a genealogical enquiry, she was "very proud to be a Beatty," probably because of the connection she could claim to this kind and generous man.<sup>49</sup> Her records indicate that she respected and loved Henry. Henry wrote a letter that has remained preserved among all the

family tree diagrams and photocopies from indexes of county record books in the Beatty family binder. The letter, dated February 19, 1907 is addressed to Jessie's sister Nellie:

Dear Niece,<sup>1</sup>

I seat myself to drop you a few lines to let you know that I am real well today my health is better now that hit<sup>2</sup> has been for some time. I think we have had an unpleasant winter not much snow but very wet and muddy. I am 75 years old past and am quite smart for my age can hear much and see as good as when I was 20 years old. I may see 100 years old yet.<sup>50</sup>

The optimism expressed in the letter was the last thing I was expecting after looking at his photograph. The letter goes on to ask about Nellie's welfare and tells her to be good to the family she is staying with (a Mr. and Mrs. Miller, who are not identified in the family record). In contrast, Jessie was not fond of her father. Besides the photograph above and his obituary, there is almost no information on him, only a few notes about his biography when absolutely necessary. One reason why there might not be a lot of positive stories around Charles was his association with the Ku Klux Klan. I have tried to find information about his involvement, but it is just not clear. This is a connection the family tends to ignore, and today, there is almost no information on the nature of his role in the organization. I did not find out about it until I read his obituary. How deep his involvement was in the organization cannot be determined but he was active enough for them to be present at his funeral. Apparently, "the floral offerings" from the KKK were "profuse and beautiful."<sup>51</sup>

Pap has negative view of Charles, likely influenced by his mother's disapproval. Where he has always told me that his parents worked very hard and were careful and responsible with their money and jobs, Charles was reckless and irresponsible. This became particularly evident when he told me the most confusing story about our family history I have ever heard. One evening during my research trip on the mountain, we were all sitting in the living room, watching TV after a long

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<sup>1</sup> Nellie was actually Henry Clay's granddaughter. I am not sure why he referred to her as niece, but she is definitely the one the letter is written to.

<sup>2</sup> This letter is transcribed exactly as it is written and kept in the records.

day. Pap had been outside hauling tree branches with his tractor. Grandma had been running errands and making calls to friends and associates in her many community organizations. And I had spent most of the day at the Preston County Courthouse trying to find documents relating to the Beatty and Shaffer families, two groups that I knew had been in the area for a very long time.

Preston has a reputation across the state of West Virginia as a problem for genealogists and historians because of the notorious county courthouse fire of 1869. Researchers, from the West Virginia Regional History Collection at WVU to genealogists across the country searching for long dead ancestors, have been thwarted in their efforts by this one fire over a century ago. The fire wiped out every single record (from land deeds to wills to marriage licenses and more) at the courthouse. So, the only records at the courthouse are those dating from 1870 and on. This meant that I would find only data relating no further back than my grandparents' grandparents. I dug into the record books in the orderly and well-kept courthouse. But, I what I found puzzled me. Well, I guess it would be more accurate to say that I was puzzled by what was *not* in the records. Several documents, holding key information explaining my family's economic status, the transfer of land, and ownership of coal rights or timber holdings were completely missing. Pap had told me about some of the ways his family had moved around the county, from farm to farm, but what I saw in the records did not add up.

When I told him about my confusion later that evening, Pap nodded his head knowingly. He had been to the courthouse before and had looked through many of the same basement records that I had surveyed all afternoon. As we all sat in the living room, I grabbed my notebook and Pap told the story of his family's 500-acre farm.<sup>52</sup> It was an epic, taking up most of the evening. Records in the courthouse verified almost nothing, Pap said. The courthouse did not have the will of Charles Beatty, which would have been a goldmine of information on land ownership and monetary inheritance. This will had come up before as the missing piece in the puzzle of Beatty/Shaffer family history. Remember the story about Charles that Pap told me at Thanksgiving? About the timber, making a fortune, and how Charles had supposedly left all the profits of that business

endeavor to Jessie Shaffer, Pap's mother? Well, this same man had once held the deed to a 500-acre farm, the pride of his father, Henry Clay Beatty.<sup>53</sup>

While the census records Charles's profession as a farmer and his obituary records it as a member of the county court, he was also, according to Pap, a carpenter. In the early 1900s (around 1905-1910), he built a big and beautiful house on the farm for his family. He lived there with the children of his second wife (Henry refused to allow any of his assets to pass to Charles's children by his first wife). Fortunately for us, Jessie was Charles's oldest daughter through the approved spouse. According to memory, the house was absolutely gorgeous, the pride of the community, and large enough to comfortably serve all the Beattys and, as they got married, their spouses.

But luck was not on Charles's side. Lightening struck his dream house, causing a fire that quickly spread and consumed the entire structure. Undeterred, Charles was prepared to build a second house. Unfortunately, the lavishness and grandeur of the first residence had stretched his resources and he had to borrow heavily to get the money for the second house. For some reason, in order to acquire the funds, Charles transferred the ownership of the farm to his children: Henry Clay's grandchildren and their spouses. Details are very fuzzy. Pap, not born when this land is changing hands, does not know exact dates, and the only records in the courthouse skip this transaction. All relevant deeds are missing. The next transaction the courthouse did have was when Charles somehow found the funds to buy the land back from his children in 1924.<sup>54</sup> With these funds he built a second house, as wonderful as the first. Guess what happens? It burns down too. Apparently done with building beautiful houses just to see them burn to a crisp, Charles and his family live in a collection of shacks, the only buildings they could now afford to construct.

Charles's luck, so good in previous years with his timber endeavor and his accumulation of land and large family, kept deteriorating. According to family lore, a normal day turned sour for Charles when his favorite horse, Charlie, kicked him in the chest. He managed to hold on for a few days, but on October 16, 1925 he keeled over dead. The author of his obituary, shocked at the suddenness of his passing, wrote that on the fateful morning:

Mr. Beatty had got up and built a fire in the living room and was apparently as well as usual. He was carrying a lamp into the kitchen and set it upon the table and immediately, without even a moan, fell dead on the floor beside the table, the result of heart failure.<sup>55</sup>

How the author knew the nature of Charles's keeling over baffles me, but for sure the local paper failed to mention any influence a hoof to the chest might have had on his heart. Pap assures me that it was definitely the horse that killed him.

A year after his death, Jessie, her siblings, and their spouses were still living in the poorly constructed houses on their farm. Rufus Shaffer, Pap's father and Jessie's husband since August 25, 1921, persuaded Jessie's siblings to sell him and Jessie their shares of the Beatty land. Jessie's brother John sold Rufus his share in 1926, and in 1931, Nellie and her husband George follow suit (although they continued to live on the land).<sup>56</sup> It would seem that this was the end of the turmoil. Rufus and Jessie were hard workers (according to Pap), and they no longer had to worry about Charles's irresponsible spending. They could concentrate on farming and reaping the benefits of their newly acquired land.

But, as Pap kept saying "now hold on, I'm not done yet." The story keeps going, and it gets weirder. A few years after successfully buying the entire farm from the rest of their family, Rufus and Jessie hit a financial rough patch. They decide to downsize to an eleven-acre farm and move the family (which at that time included my grandfather and his older brother). The 500-acre farm is "bought" by a couple unrelated to the family. I say "bought" because, according to Pap, they never actually paid anything for the land. There is no deed in the courthouse indicating that ownership transferred hands. In fact, a few years after Jessie and Rufus moved, the husband of the couple died and the wife got a new boyfriend. The boyfriend, wanting to make his living situation official in the eyes of the law, asked Jessie to sign a paper that said outright that she and her family no longer owned the land, and that he and his partner did. Pap chuckles as he remembers his mother's reaction to this request. She refused him outright.

The next time the 500-acre farm comes into the records is in 1937 when it is controlled by the Federal Land Bank of Baltimore, which claimed it took the land originally belonging to Charles

F. Beatty (there is no mention of Rufus and Jessie).<sup>57</sup> There are no records stating that any other couple or family owned the land, although Pap insists that someone else did live on it, and it was not a bunch of bankers from Baltimore. Even stranger, Pap remembers his father paying an outstanding bill to the bank in 1956 for the land, a bill that Charles Beatty was supposed to have paid.

Confused yet? I was. How could there be so many holes in the story? I mean, people were there! They saw what was happening! Why did no one write it down? When Pap had finished his story, I felt like I had come too late. What I would give to have met Charles or Jessie. Well, I did meet Jessie, but very briefly. I remember attending her funeral: sitting in the car eating Twizzlers while mourners visited the cemetery in the rain, getting my cheeks pinched by many people with West Virginia accents. I wish I had known her and been able to hear her stories. She was the first person in the family to start records of relatives, alive and deceased. She kept photographs, family bibles, local history books, and more in a collection that Pap and Grandma would add to year after year.

So, what does this whole story have to do with anything? It is not the story of a family hero, like Morgan Morgan, and it does not exactly counteract the stereotypes believed by my suburban New Jersey friends. A man spending his money recklessly, families living in shacks, land records in a haphazard and incomplete mess, and a man dying from a kick of his horse? You cannot make this stuff up! In fact, this family story sounds awful familiar. The patriarch is unhappy with his son's irresponsible ways and refuses to leave him land, an essential factor for success in West Virginia. In turn, the son makes his own luck through a business venture concerning timber and manages to gain control of a large farm. When the son's luck runs out, partly due to growing reliance on coal and timber companies for wage labor (therefore not making a sustainable living on said farm) he is forced to borrow money and curtail his independent ways. The farm is lost, the son dies, and his family falls from grace into relative economic disadvantage. This is almost a direct parallel to events that Devil Anse Hatfield experienced. The entire time I worked on this project I had distanced my family as far as possible from the Hatfields and McCoys. My family has no history of violence, stayed almost entirely on the right side of the law – in fact, Henry Clay Beatty and Charles Fremont

Beatty were officers of the law – and did not have a history of excessive drinking. In fact, I had separated my family from the Hatfields in my mind so much that I did not recognize the surprising similarities until someone else pointed them out to me. After a closer look, the situations really are remarkable similar. They took place at nearly the same time, and were dealing with exactly the same forces. How come my family did not end up killing anyone? Why was my family's story not all over the newspapers? I believe that it is because while locals value grounded history, the kind of stories that can be told and remembered, the rest of the country wanted exciting mischief and mass appeal. Hatfields shooting McCoys is more interesting than a slow loss of economic stability due to improper repayment of loans.

But these are the types of stories repeated time and time again. While Charles is vilified, hardworking Rufus and Jessie manage to make a home even after the problems beset on them by lightning and financial difficulty. Grandma remembers how passionate Jessie was about the farm she used to live on, and how she would repeatedly blame Charles for losing it, even though he died before they moved. Land and the pride that comes with owning it, farming it, and using it keep the story relevant. It teaches about responsibility. In West Virginia in the late 1800s and early 1900s, the things that were of foremost importance to inhabitants were family and land. Land was livelihood. Who would guess that the handsome man with the mustache fitted the stereotypes of Appalachians created by reformers more than the bearded mountaineer? This story is not farfetched in Preston County.

## **Coal mining, Strikes, and Railroads**

If Henry Clay Beatty had been a little more cheerful in his picture, he might have been the spitting image of the West Virginia University mascot: the rugged mountaineer. Unlike most college mascots, the mountaineer does not wear a stylized mask or head and suit. Instead, a student dons custom historical garb including tasseled buckskins, genuine coonskin cap, and a nineteenth-century rifle. The mascot leads students and fans in cheers for the university at sporting events, expressing the pride spectators, students, and alumni feel in their university and state. Typically the mountaineer is male, but there have been two women in the past to play the role (the first of whom, Natalie Tennant, is currently West Virginia's Secretary of State).<sup>58</sup> Traditionally, male mascots grow beards after they have been selected in honor of the rugged tradition of the state. But, the mountaineer, for all his strength and courage, is not the only symbol of West Virginia's history, or the best known. The coal miner, working far underground, has about as much claim as the rugged mountaineer far above him and is perhaps a much more relatable figure for citizens throughout the state.

The image of the coal miner and his family is associated time and time again with the people of Appalachia. The coal miner is as embedded in the hills and hollers of West Virginia and Kentucky as the mineral he produces. West Virginia and Kentucky are home not only to thousands of miners but also some of the richest coalfields in the world. The West Virginian or Kentuckian miner carries the weight of a long, violent history and a conflicted present. It is not hard to imagine a coal miner. Every detail about him emphasizes his place at the bottom of the social ladder, constantly struggling to support himself and his family. Coal dust covers every inch of his skin and clothes during and after his toils in the mines. He and his family live in a dusty company house identical to all the other company houses found in the company town. He stands on his porch and leans on the railing, exhausted from a grueling 12-hour shift underground. His wife is poised sternly in the background holding a young child who looks hungry. Despite all his long hours underground,



day after day, year after year, he remains trapped in poverty. Whether or not this image is accurate, it instantly comes to mind at the slightest hint of “coal miner.”

So ubiquitous is this representation of the dirty, tired miner, gaunt wife, and hungry child that filmmakers, photographers, journalists, and others have for decades worked on capturing it exactly, often to the resentment of residents. One such filmmaker, a Canadian named Hugh O'Connor, was shot and killed by a local landowner named Hobart Ison as he attempted to film this exact Appalachian scene in 1967. Many, if not a majority, of the residents of the eastern Kentucky town of Jeremiah were outraged by O'Connor's and others' seemingly bleak interest in their “terrible” lives.<sup>59</sup> O'Connor's film was never made, but hundreds of other non-fiction and fictional depictions of coal country exist to perpetuate the stereotypical image of the coal miner and his desperate life.

My ancestors might have been the objects of such outside crusades. But my family left the mines. My grandfather refused to work underground, a prospect that many could not escape. While there were thousands of different courses a miner or miner's son or daughter could, and often did take in life, the only one that is remembered and perpetuated by non-miners is of poor worker. The sad image of white poverty as manifested by coal miners, their families, and their economic and social struggles remains in the American psyche. It is this side of coal mining that persists.

Conversely, in both Kentucky and West Virginia, mention of the coal boom brings back positive ideas about the glory and duty of producing fuel for a growing industrial country.<sup>60</sup> Miners and their loved ones often feel nostalgic for the bygone era. This feeling contrasts sharply with the frustration that was widespread in the era when coal controlled so many Appalachian lives. The people of coal producing towns and counties (of both the past and present) are, in my opinion, trapped in a “love/hate” relationship with the coal industry. When coal is booming, workers have jobs and income that allow them to live well: they can afford to buy and repair homes, clothing, education, and other necessities. But with these benefits comes a great cost. With an increase of jobs and profits comes an increase in risk of injury or death during a mining accident. In recent decades 10 men, on average, have died from working in coalmines in West Virginia each year.<sup>61</sup> The

most recent accident to garner national attention occurred in 2006 when an explosion trapped thirteen workers underground in a mine in Sago, WV.<sup>62</sup> After hours of figuring out the logistics of locating the miners, maneuvering, and digging through the ground without causing a cave-in, rescuers finally entered the mineshaft. An initial report spread through the community that all but one of the miners had been saved. Unfortunately, this was just a rumor. Upon reaching the trapped men, rescuers found one miner in a deep coma and twelve dead. The truth caused devastation and heartbreak among everyone with a connection to the mine.<sup>63</sup> Officials were unclear as to the exact cause of the accident, but the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) had found over a hundred safety violations at the Sago mine in the previous year. Immediately the press began finger pointing and assigning blame onto the company that ran the mine, International Coal Group, Inc., or, alternatively, onto the local union chapter.

Coal was a blessing and a curse for Appalachia because it brought in tradition, pride, duty, money, and industry, but it also carried danger and damage to both workers and the environment. Was my grandfather taking into account all of the many layers of mining when he refused to work underground? Stories of riches and horrors intertwined to create a rocky relationship between West Virginia and its beautiful, black coal.

The coal miner is near and dear in my family. Both my grandmother and grandfather grew up surrounded by coalmines, dust, and miners. My grandmother's father, Virgil Kidwell, labored as a cutting machine operator on the night shift in a deep mine. Years of breaking into the rocky coal seam, releasing thousands of particles into the air, and breathing in the clouds of thick, gritty black dust took its toll. Breathing was hard, and nothing could help him quite catch his breath. After decades of exposing and preparing black gold for the day shift, the slack and ever-present dust had done its work. He was finally obliged to quit. Like many before and after him, he contracted black lung after decades of exertion underground. Doctors verified his condition and he collected compensation from the government: a small reward for his valuable work. My grandmother grew up near a mine in Morgantown with her father. Virgil's employment paid the rent for the company house where Grandma and her family lived. Coal got everywhere: on the floors and windows,

between sheets and clothing, on the siding of the house, and in people's eyes, ears, and noses. I used to wonder where my mom got her strong desire to clean the house all the time, a habit that I have picked up. I am starting to think it harkens back to watching her mother clean the house, who had watched her mother clean the house in a relentless and never-ending battle with coal dust.

West Virginia coal suffuses my grandparents' memories just as it permeated the air they breathed growing up. Grandma's strongest memory of the time before moving to Preston County when she was in the first grade is of the local company store. The company store (the name of the company eludes my grandmother, but she does remember it was a union coal-company, an oddity in the area at the time)<sup>3</sup> sold everything: groceries, home goods, tools, candy, and more. When you were a bit tight on cash at the store, the company let you buy the goods but took the bill right out of your paycheck. While my grandmother remembers the store fondly, historians have found that others were less affectionate towards the coal company and its frequently overarching control. Other things my grandmother remembers about the coal company besides the store was that the different mines were named after the head of the company's family. The mine her father worked in was named "Mabel," after the boss's daughter.<sup>64</sup> The paternalistic nature of the coal company's relationship with its employees evoked a combination of nostalgia and anger.

The work in the coalmine did not go on forever. Virgil decided to move his family (including my grandmother) to Preston County, where he worked in a mine for a very short time, then ran a sawmill with his brother. He just did not want to work underground in a deep mine any more.<sup>65</sup> Pap would grow up with the same sentiment. One of the most adamant statements I have ever heard Pap say is that he never wanted to work in a coalmine. He never wanted to grow up to be a miner, live as a miner in a coal town, work underground, or do anything else related to mining coal. But, in West Virginia, coal was inescapable. While most of the mining Pap experienced was of a backyard variety (farmers mining seams on their land for personal use in cooking and heating their homes), company work was not far away. After he graduated from high school in 1947, and worked

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<sup>3</sup> Possibilities of the company in Morgantown that Virgil Kidwell worked for as based on Edkin's Catalogue of Coal Scrip: Chaplin Collieries Co., Delmar Coal Co., Dragon Coal Co, Ross Coal Co.

a few odd jobs at the local golf course, Pap decided that his need for money trumped his distaste for the mines. He worked for the Industrial Coal Company of Kingwood at a cleaning tippie that served the needs of six local mines. This aboveground work (Pap, unlike his father-in-law, never went underground) involved watching tons of coal go down a belt where he picked out everything that was not coal and threw it away. Pap said it was cold and dusty work. He spent hours standing on his feet, hands black with grime and dust, but at \$1.10/hour worth the discomfort.<sup>66</sup> A few years of sorting coal from dirt was enough for him. Upon receiving his draft notice for Korea, he left the coal industry for good. After the completion of his tour of duty, he returned to West Virginia where he was determined to get away from the mines. In his case, this meant learning algebra to take a qualifying exam for an apprenticeship in Baltimore. Somewhat ironically, he apprenticed in a steel factory serving an industry heavily dependent on the fuel power of coal. Pap worked for Bethlehem Steel for thirty-five years until his retirement.<sup>67</sup> After raising his family in Baltimore, he returned to West Virginia, apparently done forever with the black gold.

Yet, for West Virginia, coal is a fact of life. When I asked Pap how many people he knew in the coal industry growing up, he told me that nearly all his neighbors worked in and around mines; even landowners would toil in the mines during the day and farm at night. His relatives mined on the Beatty farm (before it was taken out of their hands), digging through layers of rock, building supports and tracks for little carts to haul the heat for their homes.<sup>68</sup> Coal was used for everything and found everywhere. Everyone relied on coal for their daily lives. He remembers that each farm in and around the Portland district (where he grew up) had its own little mine that would serve the needs of each family. These small, unofficial mines continued to operate until advanced technology and larger corporate operations made them irrelevant.

Although people no longer depend on backyard supplies, coal still plays a significant role in everyday life in Preston County. Hints of this hit me as I drove through the county this past summer. Industrial run-off from mining had stained the stones lining streams and creeks an unnatural reddish orange color. Signs exclaiming “Stop the War on Coal: Fire Obama” were on nearly every lawn, a testament to the strong feelings in support of coal held by county residents.

The 2012 presidential election was going to be won or lost in West Virginia virtually on the issue of coal alone.<sup>69</sup> Citizens considered a war on coal a war on their lives. The federal government had given my great grandfather Virgil assistance for his black lung, but at the same time could potentially cripple the economy of the area. Today coal is losing ground against other forms of energy. Recently, locals decided to shut down a huge power plant a few minutes down the road from my grandparents' farm. Built in the 1950s, it used to be the area's largest consumer of coal. Environmental factors (mainly not being up to code) and technological obsolescence worked together to shut it down. Even so, the people of Preston County still very much depend on the coal industry, despite the popular belief that the age of coal is over. That is surprising, since Preston lies in the northeast quadrant of the state. The heart of coal country lies in the opposite corner, in the southwest of the state where West Virginia borders Kentucky, right at the heart of where the Hatfields and McCoys used to rule. Designated a US "National Heritage Area" in 1996, the southwestern coalfields of West Virginia have been determined as representing a "unique cultural region where coal mining has made a significant contribution to the national story of industrialization."<sup>70</sup> Preston County deserves attention too. But coal and mining, although no longer done in the county on a scale anywhere near like it was in the past, are still major actors visible in the remnants of old mines or processing plants, advertising themselves in commercials during the evening news, and calling for attention on road signs along the windy back roads.

New technologies and systems of manufacture have remade the process of coal production in recent years. The coal towns of the 1940s and 50s that remain in the forefront of people's minds are a relic of the past. Their prominence was at its height when it was cheaper for a company to furnish everything (e.g. houses, transportation, stores, churches, and more) than to let employees look out for themselves. Since coal generated huge profits in these decades, local governments thrived on the taxes and employment the companies provided. But technological advances have reduced the manual labor needed in mines, and the push towards clean energy limits future growth. Yet, as became clear during my short stay there, the stories and family lore involving coal remain relevant today.<sup>71</sup>

There is no shortage of coal mining stories and tales from West Virginia or Kentucky. The vast scholarship about the cultural, environmental, physical, and mental effects of the coal industry can seem overwhelming. Like apple pie, coal is an American staple and has been studied from a great many angles. My interest lies in the family, local, and national traditions and stories about coal and narratives of coal-mining communities. Many of my friends, hearing my topic, immediately recommended films to watch or books to read. I took their advice and read or watched everything I could find, ranging from *The Coal Miner's Daughter*, the fictional representation of country western singer Loretta Lynn's rise to fame from Buther Hollow, Kentucky to beloved star, to *Stranger with a Camera*, a documentary seeking to figure out why the Canadian film maker Hugh O'Connor was killed in 1967 for trying to tell a story about coal country. Dozens of news stories and History Channel shows depict coal mining, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Appalachia. There is an abundance of material. Two of my favorites are Homer Hickam's *October Sky* (1998) and *Harlan County USA* (1976); the Academy Award winning documentary directed by Barbara Kopple. Both illustrate on very personal levels how coal and mining affect people in virtually every aspect of their lives. In addition, the parallels between my grandparents' and family's experience with coal and these narratives help to explain the decisions and life choices my forbears made.

Keeping her cameras running at all times, Kopple (a New Yorker eager to help the cause of striking Kentucky miners) documents the bitter struggle between company and striking workers at the Brookside coal mine in the "bloody Harlan County" battle of 1973. Kopple's camera is present at every meeting, discussion, and fight. The filmmaker positions herself behind the leaders of the union at Brookside, waking with picketers at dawn, and running her camera alongside men armed with baseball bats against gun-toting strikebreakers.<sup>72</sup> Not only did *Harlan County USA* popularize the medium of documentary film because of its intriguing and emotional characters, but it also showed to a general audience the struggle that was happening right around the corner in their own country. In contrast, Homer Hickam, who completed his memoir in the mid 1990s, looks back at his adolescent years and describes what it was like growing up in the company town of Coalwood, West Virginia in the late 50s and early 60s. He writes his story with the town of Coalwood as one of

the main characters. While centered on his quest to build high-flying rockets, the setting and circumstances of his life are unique to West Virginia.<sup>73</sup> The two accounts, when taken together, give extensive and varied looks at life in Kentucky and West Virginia that, because of the prominence of coal mining, have shaped memories and images of the region for decades.

*Harlan County USA* provides a shocking look into events that many Americans could not comprehend. Basic amenities that most Americans did not think twice about were absent in this part of the US. Kopple showed her audience that many of the people in Appalachia lacked electricity, running water, and food. These abject conditions led to the violent strike that gave Harlan County its “bloody” reputation. The film restored Appalachian poverty to the national limelight. Just as Harry M. Caudill’s *Night Comes to the Cumberlands* had in 1962 and CBS’s *Christmas in Appalachia* television special in 1964, Kopple’s documentary insisted that all was not well in the country.<sup>74</sup> White people in rural America were suffering the same misery as impoverished blacks in the cities that had exploded in riots during the 1960s. The most striking parts of her film were, arguably, not the pictures of ragged shacks without running water, or men covered in coal dust walking to and from the mine. Rather, they were the scenes of unity between workers and their families (especially the mothers and wives), and the intensity and passion with which the miners fought for a better life.

West Virginia, Kentucky and other parts of Appalachia have frequently been described as a “Third World” in America. Locals resent and reject this characterization.<sup>75</sup> The term evokes impoverished living conditions, ill-educated inhabitants, and general decay. Whether applied to Haiti, Guatemala, or West Virginia, “Third World” reduces people to their material circumstances and dismisses them as a poor and ignorant “other.” The term ignores the dynamic community, intelligence, and resourcefulness of coal workers and their families, so strikingly displayed in Kopple’s film, especially by the leaders of the striking force. Of all of the people she captures, Lois Scott, the “leader” of the women in the community, affected me the most. A middle aged woman, never fully labeled as a “wife” or “mother” of a miner but instead concerned for everyone, Scott is the most eloquent and charismatic personality in the entire film. She was a woman who knew what

she wanted and would stop at nothing to get it. She wanted recognition from the company, backbone from the union, higher wages, better living conditions, and protection from the strikebreakers. She wanted her fellow women to wake up at the crack of dawn and stand by their men. When the men of Brookside started getting shot at, she rallied support to get more police on the field and get company thugs arrested. At a meeting after the union picketers had experienced yet another day of abuse, Scott pulls a gun out of her breast, smiling and encouraging others to protect themselves and take action, like her.<sup>76</sup> She is confident and passionate in the union cause, and believes that as workers, they deserve what they are asking and will get it, but only if they work hard and never give up. Her strength and charisma fuel the rest of the workers months and months into their struggle. No one watching the film could argue that this woman was a lazy hillbilly or ignorant Third World resident.

Kopple's film illustrates how violence and coal mining have been linked for decades in Kentucky and West Virginia. An opening sequence of her film depicts an elderly miner recalling the mines of the 1930s. Back then it had been standard practice to lead mules into the mines to pull carts full of coal. His bosses were very clear that those animals were never to be placed in any danger. The number one priority (besides mining coal) was to protect the mule. As the miner rocks back in his chair he explains that it was a lot less expensive for the company to replace a worker than a mule.<sup>77</sup> Forty years later, as Kopple records, the company, Duke Power, was taking the same shortcuts with no regard for human life. Although regulations had been put in place to ensure miners' safety, they were regularly ignored. Union workers continued to fight even though they were battling a force that had beaten them, shot at them, and abused them for decades.

The documentary exposes how coal companies exploited their resources, both mineral and human. The company reaped huge profits from the tons upon tons of coal it took from the earth, and yet they barely paid the men to extract it. Scenes of automobiles driving into crowds of furious union members, cursing and yelling at the strikebreakers through the windows, police officers lining up and handcuffing teenagers and women who refused to stop blocking the entrance into the mine, and notorious gun thugs shooting bullets into a scattering and ducking crowd were not new in the



1970s. My grandfather and grandmother recognized articles in the newspaper and images of such scenes their entire lives. Coal mining was already one of the most dangerous occupations in the United States, but the union bid to improve things proved deadly. At Brookside, the battle between the company and the union only stopped after the death of one of the strikers. Kopple captures the despair of the women the worker left behind: his grief-stricken mother and young wife.<sup>78</sup> The image of these two women at the coffin showed viewers that male union members were not the only victims of company policy. The entire family suffered from the unfair policies. Even Duke Power could not justify its actions after seeing the damage that its “war” inflicted on innocent women and children.

I asked my grandparents if they had ever seen *Harlan County USA*. The answer was no. Had they ever heard of “bloody Harlan County” and the violent strikes in Kentucky and in the southern part of their state? Both immediately affirmed that they had, and Pap was quick to add that nothing similar had ever happened in Preston. I did a little digging, and the only reference I could find to a coal miners’ strike in Preston involved a labor conflict back in 1912, way before my grandfather or grandmother had been born.<sup>79</sup> There are not a lot of details on the strike, and almost no information on any difficulties afterwards. Considering the frequency of strikes in southern West Virginia and northern Kentucky, the peace in Preston County mines is surprising. The reason, Pap told me, was simple: local workers declined to join unions. In the eyes of Preston County officials and coal company representatives, unions were the problem. They were what caused workers to be riled up and upset, not the conditions that employees worked under or the wages the company paid them. Pap said that the county tried to avoid the problems that these other areas were having, and worked hard to achieve this goal. It was so in the 1930s, and so it has remained.

Grandma, eight years younger than Pap, remembers listening to her father talking about strikes but they were nothing like the strikes in Harlan County or, as will be discussed later, Homer Hickam’s hometown of Coalwood. I am glad that my grandparents never experienced the same hardships as the union strikers at Brookside. From their stories, neither my grandmother nor my grandfather (or their parents) lived in the same conditions of those worst off in Kopple’s film.

While there were similarities (i.e. my grandmother's company house) they just were not impoverished: they had electricity, running water, and did not struggle to put food on the table. And my grandmother has no memory of her father's company threatening its employees with guns. Miners were not subject to a universal condition across Appalachia. And yet, the stereotype of the miner is always of a struggling family, not a nominally well-paid or satisfied one. This is partly because of the suffering of many, but not all, miners, partly because of the violence in specific mines, and because of the efforts of those like Kopple to show human rights violations where they occurred.

The tiny, individual coal mines my grandfather remembers as a young boy and the larger ones created while he was in his late teens and early 20s in Preston County, were dwarfed in comparison to those found in McDowell County, West Virginia in the south of the state. In the 1940s and 50s, jobs were plentiful and money was rolling in as the United States and its many manufacturers needed coal to fuel their industries. Homer Hickam remembered the good times when miners worked double or triple shifts at the mine right down the road from his house, and the coal town appeared to young Hickam upbeat, lively, and happy.<sup>80</sup> Hickam centers his narrative on the daily life of a mining town. Even as a high school student, Hickam's life revolved around problems concerning mine ventilation (keeping breathable air in the deep shafts), injuries in the mine from falling supports, coal dust, and equipment failure, profits from the company, and working with tools and resources that the company provided. These were problems that his and his friends' fathers, brothers, and uncles dealt with on a daily basis. While Homer and his friends were not directly in the mine, they listened to conversations about these topics at the dinner table, around town, and in school. His accounts of houses colored gray from excess coal dust, of men moving in and around the tippie (the entrance of the mine shaft), and union men butting heads with company bosses offer a comprehensive look at circumstances and problems happening all throughout West Virginia and Kentucky during the reign of coal. Bad times consisted of the moments when men got injured or died in the mine, when there were strikes and stalemates between the company and the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), or when laid off miners were forced to leave their

homes.<sup>81</sup> The tension that existed between locals and outsiders – company men from the Northeast – could literally stop a town from functioning: certain businesses would shut down because their proprietors refused to serve the company’s needs and more. How these strikes were perceived depended on who was looking at them. Major industries saw them as a blockage of production, an unfair tactic workers could use to take more than they deserved. Miners and the people living in and around coalmine country saw strikes as an effective way to get a large corporation’s attention. These attitudes and motivations would lead to situations like the Harlan county strikes in the early 70s.

Like my grandparents, Hickam looks back on his life. Writing forty years after events took place, Hickam recalls what happened in Coalwood in a unique way. His father was a local man who was loyal to the company, an oddity in the town. After hearing that Coalwood was a place where “a man could make a good life for himself,” Homer Sr. moved there and was soon handpicked by the owner of the mine to manage and oversee his peers.<sup>82</sup> Forever, this placed a wedge between all the Hickams and the other families in town, as well as between Homer Sr. and his son. No decision regarding the mine could be agreed on between the workers and the company, and although Homer Sr. was a local man, he had chosen to side with the company. When Hickam tries to understand his father (something that he failed to do throughout his childhood and his life), he just cannot see why his father loves the mine so much. Hickam’s dad’s father (his grandfather), Poppy had worked in the mine and had lost both of his legs in an accident with an errant mine car. Homer Sr. nearly dies multiple times in the mine, either from accidents or from incurable black lung disease from years of breathing in coal dust. Yet, he loves the mine and cannot stand to be away from it, even when recovering from illness or injury. Hickam just cannot understand this, and he sympathizes with his mother’s hatred of the mine more than his father’s love.

Yet, no one in McDowell County could escape the mines. Every one of Hickam’s uncles was a miner, and all his aunts miners’ wives.<sup>83</sup> My grandmother and grandfather have similar memories of neighbors and family members working in mines. While Pap remembers his relatives working on their own small mines, Grandma has several cousins and second cousins who worked or still work in mining for larger, more industrial companies. Again, there are good memories and bad

memories according to who you ask or who you are talking about. Pap was asked by the local historical society to write a history of the Preston County coalmines. He obliged with a record of all the mines (to his knowledge) that were once active in the county. Interestingly, his list does not contain the names of many of what most would consider the “proper” companies in the area. A search of all the coal companies in Preston County recovered a list of many established companies – employers who had mines and hired workers to work for them, as opposed to backyard mines. According to *Edkin’s Catalogue of Coal Scrip*, (a collection of five volumes of collected scrip from mines all around the country, one of which is entirely devoted to West Virginia, the other forty-nine states share four), Preston had as many as twenty-two coal companies in operation at various times in its history.<sup>84</sup> The collection was published in 2002 and was created by compiling all the company scrip, the equivalent of money for use at the company store by miners and their families. In contrast, Pap’s list consists of about a dozen loose-leaf notebook pages with the names of his neighbors, their farms, and who ran them. His recollection of coalmines is very different from the company mines recorded in Edkin’s collection or in McDowell County. According to Pap, the Beatty Farm (belonging to his grandfather) had a working mine, as did the neighboring farms of Whetsell, Wilson, Chidester, the Preston Country Club, and more. Pap has a good memory. I examined the 1940 census to check on Pap’s recollection, and he was for the most part correct. Every farm that he included was a neighbor.<sup>85</sup> His relatives, his friends, his neighbors all worked in mining in some form, whether as formal employees, or as family members doing chores. Stories of problems and triumphs in the mine were told at every dinner, family gathering, and at virtually every conversation. The entire history of Coalwood was recounted at the Hickam dinner table.<sup>86</sup> Pap and Grandma learned the history of Terra Alta and Preston just by keeping their eyes and ears open growing up. Pap is fascinated with family history, and in this case, it overlapped with mining.

The balance between loving the mine and hating the mine is a constant in Hickam’s narrative, and in the narratives of a lot of the citizens living around coal in the 1950s and 1960s. He remembers the coalmine with fondness (the sound of men changing shifts, the bustling activity of the tool shops, climbing into trains full of coal on a bet, and more) and hatred (his father hacking up

a lung, a school friend disappearing because his dad had been laid off, a neighbor dying in a mine explosion). So it is with my grandparents, who, like Hickam, escaped the mines and now look back with the same mixed feelings.

A constant thread running through *October Sky* is the conflict between staying in the mountains, where one belonged, and escaping to pursue bigger and better things. A plaque in my grandparent's house reads "If you are lucky enough to be in the mountains, you are lucky enough," a sentiment shared by many West Virginians.<sup>87</sup> Hickam begins his narrative at a crossroads: he never thought about leaving simply because no one ever did. Yet, after learning about space and partaking in his adventures with rockets and calculus, Hickam felt a desire to leave the mountains. After leaving the mine and seeing the world during his stint in the army, Pap was determined to do something different too. Unlike Hickam who went to NASA, Pap went to Baltimore. If this was not as big a jump, it was as significant for Pap. As he tells it, working in the mines was not for him. Was Hickam's and Pap's desire to leave an insult to their families and neighbors who stayed in the mountains?

Interestingly, one of the largest employers in Preston, since the coal companies did not have the same hold on the area as in McDowell County, was the Baltimore & Ohio railroad. Some of Pap's relatives who he remembers digging coal in their back yards on the weekends spent their days working for the railroad. While my grandparents' farm is located in the Portland district of Preston County, their address is that of the town of Terra Alta. In 1852, when the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad (B&O) entered West Virginia at Wheeling, it quickly made its way through the state to Preston County. The town of Terra Alta became one of several hubs in the area. While the largest station was located in Grafton, a few miles away, the company employed many of Terra Alta and the Portland district's residents.<sup>88</sup> While there were a few passenger trains that passed through the area, most of the trains coming and going were loaded with tons upon tons of coal from surrounding areas. Before the completion of the railroad, inland towns in the mountains like Terra Alta were cut off from trade because of the difficulty of transporting goods on mountain roads. Conestoga wagons and carts could only move so much freight, and what little they could only at a very slow

pace. The rails for the train were built simultaneously going east from Wheeling and west from Baltimore. When they finally met at Roseby's Rock there was much celebration. The Ohio River and the Chesapeake Bay were finally connected, opening the wealth of mineral and natural resources from western Virginia to the rest of the world.<sup>89</sup> Trade increased so much with the railroad that more tracks were called for. Multiple tracks were laid that could handle the heaviest and the largest trains, racing through the mountains with coal, other goods, and occasionally a few passengers. While the area was opened up for industry, it never became a hustling metropolis. Trains were used for large industrial transportation (timber and coal), while passenger trains became less and less frequent. But, the area was no longer completely cut off from the surrounding country. People living in Terra Alta were not "trapped" on the mountain.

It is hard for me to imagine Terra Alta as a center for anything, let alone one of the largest hubs for trade and commerce that it once was. Today, the only reminders of the train at its heyday are the tracks that are seldom used. The roads around the area are well worn from the traffic of cars, and it is quite a hike along windy roads at slow speeds to get there. While a passenger train continues to operate in Grafton, Terra Alta is no longer the center of activity that it once was. Pap loves trains. Why was it he did not try to get a job for the B&O instead of coal? Perhaps the pay at the coal company was better (he has told me repeatedly that \$1.10/hour was the best money around). The B&O no longer runs the tracks, and trains are no longer the only way to get goods from one place to another. Coal remains a dominant narrative in Preston, an essential element of conversation and politics. The black gold is a part of West Virginia, including Terra Alta where my grandparents live, despite the fact that railroads had a more immediate impact on the area's development than coal mining.

Coal mining and stories go together. Stories are essential to nearly all history in West Virginia. I knew during my two-week research stay that I had to visit a woman that Pap had mentioned over and over again when it came to family history and stories in the mountain state: Janice Sisler, the Preston County Historian. If it was possible for anyone to know every family that lived in Preston, or every company working there, it would be her.

### **Visiting the Preston County Historian**

Becca and Grandma were late. They had gone out shopping over an hour ago, and they had still not returned. The local Foodland had closed after the particularly bad storm in late June that caused massive power outages throughout Appalachia and the Mid-Atlantic. The store, already struggling was not able to recover its losses, leaving the only grocery store (besides a small bulk store called Save-A-Lot where one could buy several gallons of mayonnaise or a dozen pounds of frozen peas at a time) in the Kingwood area the Wal-Mart down the road. As a Wal-Mart Supercenter where all of Kingwood, Terra Alta, and the surroundings towns' needs could be found under one roof, it was a popular destination. Over the two weeks staying on the hill, Becca and I found ourselves there countless times, either with Grandma and Pap, or by ourselves running errands for them. It was a store people got lost in and Pap was getting anxious.

"We're going to be late!" he said, gathering his hat, coat, and notes of family history he was going to bring along to show the Preston County Historian, Janice Sisler.

"I texted them! Becca said they were stuck in the deli line – the woman there was very slow. They are on their way back now," I reassured him. Actually, our appointment was scheduled for one and it was barely noon, but Pap would never want to be late. We were waiting to leave because we thought Grandma was going to go with us. She and Janice were friends and visited each other periodically.

"I'm going to walk the dog," Pap could not sit still. Snickers, a small, white, fluffy mutt with an extreme under bite, was raring to go, getting anxious as Pap was gathering his going out wear. He jumped up and down while Pap put on his collar, and bolted out the door, dragging Pap with his walking stick behind him. I calmly sat on the porch and looked through my notes one more time. I was eager to meet Janice, a woman Pap described at different times as interesting, unique, obsessive, or crazy. She was "a character" and an "old lady." But she knew more about Preston County and its people than anyone around. She had written several books and her most recent work catalogued every cemetery and gravestone in the county. She knew where everyone's bodies were buried (both

literally and figuratively). Well, almost everyone's - Pap and I had not been able to find the name of his great great grandfather, and we intended to ask her why. As I sat on the porch I prepared my questions and information. I checked the batteries in my recorder, made sure I had my notebook, a pen, and the family notes I had questions about, and packed them all in the blue bag Aunt Brenda had made. The bag, described by Aunt Brenda, was "a college tote, perfect for a laptop!"

I looked up to see Snickers lifting his leg to the large and seemingly ancient chestnut tree in the middle of the farm, the tree now surrounded by pieces of branches and wood piles from the remains of arboreal victims of the same storm as the Foodland. Pap was looking toward the driveway, waiting for Grandma and Becca to return so we could go.

I looked down at my watch again and heard the crunch of gravel on the driveway. I looked up to see Grandma's car slowly make its way around the bend in the driveway. Becca waved from the passenger seat, and they parked close up to the porch to make carrying in the groceries easier.

"We're going to-," Pap began, but was cut off by Grandma's quick "Go! I have seen Janice a dozen times. You two go, we will stay here. Go!" Fifty-five years of living with Pap told Grandma how he would react to being late, and she laughed as he quickly headed toward my car. I quickly jumped up and followed him, giving a goodbye wave to Grandma and Becca, fumbling with my keys to unlock the car so we could get going.

According to his count, Pap had taken the trip between his house in Terra Alta to his house in Baltimore over 7000 times. He had been a driver for the Army in the Korean War, and he had been motoring up and down the hills of West Virginia his entire life. In contrast, I am a novice driver. My only experience with the windy and hilly West Virginian roads was on the highway a few days before to get there from Baltimore and the multiple trips to the Wal-Mart, just 10 minutes down the road, as mentioned earlier. But, Pap's vision was not as good as it used to be and it was my job to drive. I circled around the chestnut tree, narrowly avoided hitting Grandma's car in its awkward position smack dab in the middle of the field, and headed down the driveway.

Grandma and Pap live in the house that Pap that lived in for most of his life. It is an 11 acre farm, and located on Briery Mountain in a community called the Whetsell Settlement (named after



the original family who owned the land and built on it). Camp Dawson, a US national guard military base, is at the bottom and on the side of the mountain and as a result, the entire area was blacked out on GoogleEarth and other mapping technologies like GPS until a couple of years ago. The address of Pap's house was created at the same time that GPS acknowledged its existence. If you didn't know where it was, it was a hard place to find. We call the house where Grandma and Pap live the "hill house" because of the two they own in West Virginia, this one is on a hill. A huge hill, a mountain really, one that people not used to West Virginia cannot picture until they see it.

Driving up and down this hill was something I dreamed about before arriving. For years, I marveled at my parents' and grandparents' ability to drive up the nearly vertical hill. Guard rails teeter and bend over the side of the barely maintained road, full of pot-holes and cracks. The land literally falls away right off the road, giving a fantastic view of the valley hundreds of feet below. The road twists and turns up the mountain, making it impossible to see anyone coming in the other direction. The road has enough room in some spots to allow two cars to pass each other, but not enough room in others. Trees and leaves line the road on both sides and the forest blocks visibility except in a few spots that go right down through to the bottom. When I was younger, I would sit nervously in the back of the car while my mom or dad drove up the hill, closing my eyes so I could not see the massive height from which our car would plummet with the wrong turn of the wheel. As I got older, I kept my eyes glued open, hoping to prevent some fatal mistake by the driver that might unintentionally lead to our deaths. From behind the wheel, the road looks a bit better than from the backseat, but still very scary.

"I am going to just ease down the hill, ok?" I tell Pap. He grins, laughing at my unease.

"You got this. Piece of cake," he says, giving me a bit of confidence. I take my foot off the accelerator and let gravity do the work. I had heard from my parents that you should not keep your foot on the brake the whole time down the hill (which takes about 5 minutes to descend, a bit more in the other direction), so I alternate between speeding up and slowing down. I am sure that if Pap were not used to windy, hilly West Virginia roads he would have complained that he felt like he was on a ship in the middle of the ocean, but he just kept smiling. We do not pass anyone (gratefully),

and I manage to avoid the biggest potholes and slowly go around the worst turn. My stomach always flutters at the halfway point, because it is a 90 degree turn, with no guardrail (it was there, but has since slowly sunk down the side of the mountain to be useless) and the forest opens up in one line so you can see right down into the valley. After the turn, the angle is much less extreme, the road more open, and the trees block the worst of the view. I relax and speed up from the crawl I was driving at and, finally, we turn onto the road past the country club.

“I did it!” I marvel, proud of myself. I had driven up and down the hill at least 4 or 5 times in each direction so far on the trip, but each time felt like an adventure. “I cannot imagine driving this in winter. Does someone plow it for you?” I ask.

“Yeah, one of our neighbors has a plow and keeps it clear. Sam and I used to sled down this hill when we were in school. Took only 3 minutes to get down,” Pap answers, reminiscing about his childhood. Later, when I mention this anecdote to Grandma, she grimaces and says that she cannot believe that Pap’s mother let him do that.

“How was it walking back up?” I joke with a grin. Pap just laughs. It worries me and my family to no end that Pap and Grandma live in such a hard-to-reach place in the winter, but they will not budge. They have their community on the mountain, and they have neighbors that look out for each other. Plenty of them had kept the power running during the storm that beaten down on Foodland and hundreds of trees. They stay put.

With the hill behind us, the worst of the drive was over. Of course, we were not even a mile away from the house, with over 19 to go. I sped up to the limit on the small roads at the bottom of the hill, and had made up some time at the turn onto what I thought of as a real road: it has a line down the middle, is paved completely with limited holes and cracks, and has two complete lanes, one for each direction.

“Which way?” As I check to see that no one is coming, I see Pap point his finger to the left. This is a habit Pap has. He does not speak his directions, instead letting his finger do the talking. As I check the directions again Pap leans forward and does the same thing, as if he were driving. Now I know where my mom gets it. A practice that I find extremely irritating when done by my

mother seems natural from my grandfather. I followed the motion he indicated and this time got the car up to the 55 miles per hour speed limit.

The scenery was gorgeous. There were green mountains in the background, and open fields with farm equipment in the foreground. The buildings and businesses that fly by are modest and a bit run down (with the Wal-Mart an exception), but for the most part, the “wonderful” part of the West Virginia’s motto shows loud and clear. We passed streams and creeks with rocks that have been stained orange from the power company and mining activities that occurred years ago. Pap pointed out a coal seam that is still visible in the rocks. He points out a historical furnace that is commemorated on the side of the road, followed by a store owned by one of his friends from church. He knew every inch of that road. I asked him about some of the buildings that we pass, and about what was here when he was a kid, what was different or new. He answered each of my questions patiently and in detail. Now that we are on the road he is not as worried about being late, and definitely did not want me to speed to make up for lost time. Whenever he thought I was getting a little too into the conversation and not paying enough attention to the sharp turns in the road, he told me to pay attention and slow down a bit. The road was like a roller coaster in spots, with hills that snuck up on me and gave my stomach that weird jolt as if the ground was falling out from under my feet.

As we got closer and closer to Janice’s house, the scenery turned less mountainous and more farm-like. Open fields replaced forests and guardrails.

“What is her address?” I asked Pap, realizing that I did not have the note where I had written it down in front of me. I had not been using the GPS that was on the windshield, and I had no clue about how close or far we were.

“I don’t know,” he replied. “I’ll know it when I see it.” We drive a little further and, after a moment’s hesitation, Pap recognizes the house.

It was newer than the houses around Terra Alta, and had a concrete driveway with formal landscaping and a lot of pink and white flowers around the front. It had a garage, a rarity from the houses on Pap and Grandma’s mountain, and there was one tree in the front lawn. While Pap and

Grandma's house is off the beaten path, this road was fully paved, well maintained, and close to the front porch. The driveway was short, wide and flat: the kind that would have been perfect for a basketball hoop.

"We're here!" I announced to Pap who is already out of the car. I grab my bag from the backseat, hop out of the car. We walk up to the porch and I rang the doorbell. A few seconds later Janice came to the front door. Janice was an old lady, as Pap had described, but I did not think she was as old as Pap. She was very tall, much taller than Pap and me, and her hair was an unnatural red color, with eyebrows drawn on to match. She was wearing a button down shirt, some jewelry, and bright lipstick. She was intimidating, a woman who just from her looks conveyed that she knew what she was talking about, and that it was more than you would ever know. She smiled and welcomed us into her home. Pap introduced me as his granddaughter and started to explain my project. Janice led us into her study.

Upon entering the room, the first thing that came to my mind was the word "obsessed" that Pap had used earlier. The room was lined from top to bottom with shelves full of books, binders, folders, and boxes. Pictures of historic men, women, and places from around the county were displayed on the shelves or wall until not a single space except the window was clear. Janice indicated two chairs in front of a massive desk (it took up about half the room) for Pap and me, and she made her way behind it to the tall, leather swivel chair that was reminiscent of a throne. The desk was piled with papers, indexes full of names, packets of lists, books, and more photos. It felt like the office of a professor.

"The project I'm working on involves 6000 names right now," Janice cleared some of the papers off her desk, organizing some, piling others. Grandma had told me about this project, which Janice had been asked to do by a family who wanted their entire genealogy written out. "It's exhausting," she groaned. After the desk was cleared she sat down and faced me, the queen of her domain. "What would you like to know?" she asked, folding her hands in front of her and smiling. I was fumbling with my bag and as I got my notebook and recorder out I described my project.

“I guess my first question has to be ‘Why do you believe people are so interested in their family histories?’” As soon as I finished my thought, Janice was off. And could she talk! I quickly asked if I could record her, and after her affirmative, she did not take a breath for the next hour and a half. I was able to ask a few questions, and Janice answered them with anecdotes and lessons she had learned from reading about the county, pouring over old records, and studying minute details of local archives for decades. Her passion for her work was clear, and she was both proud and a bit weary of her role as historian. The way she remembered names and individual facts was almost unbelievable, pulling relatives and relations between families and where they lived and what they did from her memory without any aids. When I told her how impressive it was, she sighed. It seemed like she was carrying a burden knowing all this information, being the only person that many had to answer questions about their ancestors. Pap told her that we had been looking through her cemetery books, and she said “If somebody would have made a record of the cemeteries, even just the tombstones you can read and put it in a collection somewhere, I wouldn’t have to do this. I wish they had so I could just use the information.” Her quest for information had driven her to do enormous tasks, like the cataloguing of the gravestones, projects that required hours of work and months, or even years, to complete. As a result, she could recall even the minutest details of everything from Preston County newspapers for the past 50 years, to the minutes of county family reunions. She retained everything. I told her that it was incredible all the information she had stored, and I asked her how she remembered everything. She replied, “When you dig hard enough, it sticks.” The County Historian is a volunteer position. Janice is not paid for her work, and she told me that she does it because “Someone has to.” While she talked she would periodically lean back in her high-backed leather chair. She knew she was the most learned scholar of Preston County lore - no one came close to her knowledge or passion of local history in the area.

Eventually our discussion was interrupted when Janice got a phone call. A never-before-introduced cousin was visiting with her the next day to look through some records, and he called to change his plans a bit. I thanked Janice for all her help. She was amazing. Her work was hard, but

she loved it. As we walked about the door she told me to call if I needed any more information. I thanked her, and Pap and I returned to the car.

“What did you think?” Pap asked. “Kind of an interesting woman isn’t she?”

I loved the conversation with Janice. I loved how I could not tell if she was just interested or obsessed with Preston County families. I loved how she reveled in scandal and digging up the truth from different people’s complicated lives and situations. I loved her dedication to her task, and the importance that she placed on it.

“Yeah, an interesting old lady,” I said with a smile. As I backed the car out of the driveway, Pap had me drive past a few brick buildings he thought I would find interesting. The state was in the process of renovating them into historical sites; they were the original trade centers in Preston.

“Those bricks are from England!” Pap told me, amazed at the longevity of the buildings themselves, let alone the bricks. We then turned around, both of us thinking about history. The trip back was quieter than the one there, both Pap and me tired from the interview and thinking about the different things Janice had said. Pap had me stop at a roadside stand to pick up some local tomatoes and corn, and then we drove home. When we got to the bottom of the hill, I looked at Pap. “Come on, you can do it,” he said with a smile, “Git ‘er done.”

I turned the car up the hill and made it back to the top without incident.

## **Hillbillies and Stories**

I have always loved listening to stories. Sitting in Janice's office and listening to her talk about all the different families from Preston was better than going to a blockbuster movie or watching the final seconds of a close basketball game. I had no idea what she was going to tell me, and I was blown away by the detail and conviction of stories that had stuck around for generations. I began this project simply wanting to write stories down. But it has turned into so much more.

I had no idea how frequently rednecks and hillbillies come up in conversation. Once you start to listen for it, it becomes painfully obvious that referring to someone as a hillbilly or redneck is one of the last socially acceptable insults for certain kinds of behavior. Regardless of whether I was at home in New Jersey working on this project, at school in Connecticut, or even in West Virginia, these same connotations were always around and always demeaning for the people they represent. I could not research West Virginia and not address this glaring issue of representation, especially if I wanted to focus on storytelling. People tell stories as a way of creating their identity. Remembering certain people, highlighting certain events and places, and deciding the best way to get the story across are all indicative of how that person feels about what she is describing. When my grandfather tells me that his mother tended her own garden and grew the best tasting vegetables around, it says something beyond the joy in eating a homegrown carrot. It illustrates pride in his mother and her ability to work and accomplish something. It demonstrates the landscape that he and she grew up in, what kinds of practices they valued based on where they lived. It suggests the value of working with your hands and enjoying it. It attests to the bond between mother and son. Perhaps it simply means that Pap misses eating truly fresh carrots. But the nature of that story is representative of a lot. For West Virginia, stories became the best medium for retelling history because they were more effective at showing the different sides of issues (like the conflicting emotions about coal discussed earlier). Stories are often more flexible than scholarship when it comes to sharing the emotions behind a certain event or issue. This grounded knowledge, or local knowledge, is often a much better indicator of history (at least in this region) than scholarship that often encourages stereotypes

in the form of broad generalizations. When local knowledge does not agree with national scholarship, story telling and recording family history is all the more important. It is the best medium to get truth to those not from the region, without distorting ideas and reducing thousands of residents into one mold. That being said, scholarship and mass media have tried for decades to do just that.

I watched a lot of movies and read a lot of books for this project, many of which were completely fictional. But, despite their lack of basis in actual events, many were successful because of the accurate nature in which they portrayed situations and emotions of people in or from the Appalachians. The sitcoms and situation comedies from the 1960s and 1970s that depict bumbling mountain folk in fish-out-of-water scenarios like *The Real McCoys* (1957-1961) and *The Beverly Hillbillies* (1962-1970) exploited the hillbilly stereotype for popular appeal. Kind hearted but ignorant characters were lovable and laughable at the same time.<sup>90</sup> Creators of these TV shows took the easiest tropes to film, the most stereotypical and well known traits of mountain people and exaggerated them. They did not try to represent mountaineers in any real way.<sup>91</sup> The danger of this way of spreading information was that people who were never exposed to Appalachia or its citizens took these TV shows as reality. These were often the only types of stories about Appalachia available to people across the US. While an improvement over the newspaper articles about the Hatfields and McCoys, at least in that neither the real McCoys or the Clampetts (the affable family from *The Beverly Hillbillies*) murdered anyone, these stories still spread inaccurate ideas. The Clampetts' most distressing behavior was fun-lovingly teasing strangers bearing silly stories about human flight and telephones. They knew absolutely nothing about living in an industrial or modern United States<sup>92</sup> The so-called real McCoys fought a never-ending struggle against poverty, but in a positive, light-hearted way. Stories like the ones I heard from my family members had almost nothing in common with these two shows, but did not have the same range. Nothing my relatives could do or say would be able to eclipse the damaging effects of Hollywood's mass media.

Two more recent representations of rough mountain and coal country life go in the completely opposite direction of *The Real McCoys* and *The Beverly Hillbillies* by making Appalachian life



as violent, dark, drug-filled, and gritty as it could possibly be. Both Debra Granik's film *Winter's Bone* (2010) and the FX original series *Justified* (2010 - present) focus their mountain narratives on drug dealing and kin violence. Protagonist Ree in *Winter's Bone* finds out that her father has been giving the feds information on a rival clan's crystal meth monopoly. She tries to find her father, who is needed to appear in court so that Ree, her invalid mother, and two young siblings can remain in their home. Desperately poor, Ree must face multiple kinds of abuse, deteriorating living conditions, and a dwindling number of options in order to find out the truth about her father.<sup>93</sup> US Marshal Raylan Givens, the main character in the TV series *Justified*, faces many of the same problems as he witnesses the lengths that hardscrabble folk will go in his native Harlan County, Kentucky hollers. When rival clans like the Crowders and the Bennets fight over drugs and territory in Harlan, bodies literally pile up by the dozen as meth, pot, and oxy continue to be in high demand by the counties desperate citizens.<sup>94</sup> How is my family supposed to compete with flashy, action packed stories that reach thousands of people? How are their stories supposed to be heard? Why bother telling them?

When I started this project, I expected to hear some good family tales. I expected to sit on a porch in West Virginia and write down, word for word and detail for detail the accounts of ancestors long gone as they were remembered. But I ended up doing something quite different. Instead of recording stories, I discovered just how many ways stories are conveyed and how people approach them. There are problems to be tackled in Appalachia, just as there are problems to be tackled all across the United States. But there is no reason that West Virginia or its residents should be taken out of context or judged on a different system than anyone else. It may sound clichéd, but history does in fact shape the present. Only by understanding why and how a region developed can you even begin to understand that area as it currently exists. This essay, which takes first-person accounts, scholarship, popular media, and more is a study of representation and history. There is more to West Virginia than stereotypes allow. Family stories afford us a more accurate, a more realistic, and an often more intelligent and happy look at life in this beautiful mountain state.

So, is my family full of hillbillies? At this point, I think there might have been a few ancestors that fit the description. But more importantly, they are people living their lives. What anyone thinks of them, what ideas others have about them from pure speculation based on where they live or are from, is completely irrelevant. I love West Virginia, I love my family, and I love their stories. What more could anyone ask?

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<sup>1</sup> Charles was what John Charles Freemont Dayton Beatty went by, and that is how I will refer to him.

<sup>2</sup> David E. Whisnant, *All That is Native and Fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1983). and Henry D. Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Mind: The Southern Mountains and Mountaineers in the American Consciousness, 1870-1920*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1978).

<sup>3</sup> Charles's obituary mentions that he was a member of the county judiciary system. If this were true, he theoretically should have been able to pay his bills.

<sup>4</sup> Both photographs are located in Beatty family records compiled by my grandmother and grandfather.

<sup>5</sup> Everett Shaffer, personal interview with the author, July 27, 2012.

<sup>6</sup> Overheard and told to the author in Dec 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Graham Watson, Yahoo! Sports, "West Virginia's mascot shoots and kills a black bear with the musket we all thought was a prop." Last modified 2013. Accessed February 2, 2013, <http://sports.yahoo.com/blogs/ncaaf-dr-saturday/west-virginia-mascot-shoots-kills-black-bear-musket-205315241--ncaaf.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Tribeca Enterprises LLC, "The Wild and Wonderful Whites of West Virginia: Official Site," Last modified 2010. (Accessed February 9, 2013), <http://www.wildandwonderfulwhites.com/>.

<sup>9</sup> Viacom, "Buckwild" Last modified 2013, (Accessed February 9, 2013), <http://www.mtv.com/shows/buckwild/series.jhtml>.

<sup>10</sup> ABCNews, "Sen. Joe Manchin Asks MTV to 'Reconsider' New W.Va. Reality Show," Last modified 2012. (Accessed February 9, 2013), <http://abcnews.go.com/m/blogEntry?id=17911398>.

<sup>11</sup> But, the show will not continue to air. While MTV was prepared to renewed *Buckwild*, promising another season of crazy antics and mayhem, tragedy struck. One of the most popular stars on the show, Shane Gande, died on April 1, 2013 from carbon monoxide poisoning after his truck got stuck in mud. "MTC cancels 'Buckwild' after death of Shain Gande," *CBS News*, April 10, 2013. [http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-207\\_162-57578810/mtv-cancels-buckwild-after-death-of-shain-gande/](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-207_162-57578810/mtv-cancels-buckwild-after-death-of-shain-gande/).

<sup>12</sup> Otis K. Rice, *West Virginia: A History*, (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1985), 9.

<sup>13</sup> Rice, 13.

<sup>14</sup> Rice, 15.

<sup>15</sup> French Morgan, *A History and Genealogy of the Family of Col. Morgan Morgan: The First White Settler of West Virginia*, (Washington: 1950), 26.

<sup>16</sup> Georgia Caldwell Dubose, ed. *The West Virginia Encyclopedia*, (Charleston, WV: West Virginia Humanities Council, 2013). s.v. "Morgan Morgan," <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/2047> (accessed February 5, 2013).

<sup>17</sup> See Genealogy chart in Appendixes

<sup>18</sup> Harold Malcolm Forbes, ed. *The West Virginia Encyclopedia*, (Charleston, WV: West Virginia Humanities Council, 2013), s.v. "Zackquill Morgan," <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/2051> (accessed February 6, 2013).

<sup>19</sup> Morgan, *A History and Genealogy of the Family of Col. Morgan Morgan*, 246-7.

<sup>20</sup> Forbes, "Zackquill Morgan." and Morgan, 125.

<sup>21</sup> The Shaffer and Williams clans are connected pretty distantly (a Shaffer married a Williams about 4 generations ago), but the families are close friends and with the decrease in attendance of each reunion individually decided to combine gatherings.

<sup>22</sup> Aaron Sheehan-Dean, "Confederate Enlistment in Civil War Virginia," in *Major Problems in the Civil War and Reconstruction*, edited by Michael Perman and Amy Murrell Taylor (Boston, MA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2011), 194.

<sup>23</sup> Rice, 151-3.

- <sup>24</sup> Will Wallace Harney, "A Strange Land and a Peculiar People," *Appalachian Images in Folk and Popular Culture*, ed. W.K. McNeil (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1989).
- <sup>25</sup> Harney, 46-7.
- <sup>26</sup> Harney, 48.
- <sup>27</sup> Harney, 48-9.
- <sup>28</sup> James Lane Allen, "Through the Cumberland Gap on Horseback," *Appalachian Images in Folk and Popular Culture*, ed. W.K. McNeil, (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1989), 59.
- <sup>29</sup> Allen, 60.
- <sup>30</sup> Allen, 61.
- <sup>31</sup> Ellen Churchill Semple, "The Anglo-Saxons of the Kentucky Mountains: A Study in Anthropogeography," *Appalachian Images in Folk and Popular Culture*, ed. M. K. McNeil (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1989), 151.
- <sup>32</sup> Harney, 50 and 55, and Semple, 146 and 151.
- <sup>33</sup> David E. Whisnant, *All That is Native and Fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 22-4.
- <sup>34</sup> William Goodell Frost, "Our Contemporary Ancestors in the Southern Mountains," *Appalachian Images in Folk and Popular Culture*, ed. W.K. McNeil, (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1989), 93.
- <sup>35</sup> Richard Brodhead, *Cultures of Letters: Scenes of Reading and Writing in Nineteenth Century America*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 79.
- <sup>36</sup> Frost, 95.
- <sup>37</sup> Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 48-53.
- <sup>38</sup> Jacobson, 48 – 53.
- <sup>39</sup> Whisnant, 105-6.
- <sup>40</sup> Whisnant, 107-115.
- <sup>41</sup> Whisnant, 105.
- <sup>42</sup> Whisnant, 106.
- <sup>43</sup> Altina L. Waller, *Feud: Hatfields, McCoys, and Social Change in Appalachia, 1860-1900*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 2-6.
- <sup>44</sup> Lisa Alther, *Blood Feud The Hatfields and the McCoys: The Epic Story of Murder and Vengeance*, (Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 2012), pg 183-4.
- <sup>45</sup> Altina Waller, "Altina L. Waller: The Hatfield-McCoy Feud," *UNC Press Blog* (blog), June 11, 2012, <http://uncpressblog.com/2012/06/11/altina-l-waller-the-hatfield-mccoy-feud/>.
- <sup>46</sup> Waller, *Feud*, 36.
- <sup>47</sup> Waller, *Feud*, 37-8.
- <sup>48</sup> Waller, *Feud*, 204.
- <sup>49</sup> Personal correspondence between Robert S (Sam) Shaffer and a Mr. Beatty, Sept 2, 1996, Beatty family records.
- <sup>50</sup> Personal correspondence between Henry C. Beatty and Nellie Beatty, February 19, 1907, Beatty family records.
- <sup>51</sup> "Prominent Preston Man Dies Suddenly," obituary, Charles F. Beatty, Oct 16, 1925. Beatty family records.
- <sup>52</sup> The 500-acre farm was actually 5 plots of Portland district land adding up to 491-acres. But, in legend, it is the "500-acre farm."
- <sup>53</sup> The story of the 500-acre farm was told by Everett Shaffer and Mary Shaffer to the author on July 31, 2012. All the details of this story are purely from Pap and Grandma's memories, as told through the family by Jessie Shaffer and her brothers and sisters, Pap's Aunt Nellie and Uncle John.
- <sup>54</sup> Jessie L. Shaffer, et. al to CF Beatty, Land deed, Preston County records, 39 Oct 1924.
- <sup>55</sup> Charles F. Beatty Obituary, Oct 16, 1925.
- <sup>56</sup> John H. Beatty to Rufus and Jessie Shaffer, Land deed, Vol 169, pg 522, Preston County records, 12 June 1926 and George W. Durst to Rufus and Jessie Shaffer, Land deed, Vol 178, pg 368, Preston county records, 21 May 1931.
- <sup>57</sup> Federal Land Bank of Baltimore, Deed book 196, pg 456, Preston county records, 12 May 1937.
- <sup>58</sup> Laura Wilcox Rote, "WVU's Mascot and traditions, not to mention the state's image, are on display like never before," Last modified 2013. Accessed March 19, 2013. <http://www.morgantownmag.com/morgantown/August-September-2012/The-Year-of-the-Mountaineer/> and WVU Alumni, "Mountaineer Mascot." Last modified Oct 22, 2012. Accessed December 5, 2012. [http://alumni.wvu.edu/traditions/mountaineer\\_mascot](http://alumni.wvu.edu/traditions/mountaineer_mascot).

<sup>59</sup> Elizabeth Barret, *Stranger with a Camera*, Appalshop, VHS, 2000 and Calvin Trillin, "US Journal: Jeremiah, KY, A Stranger with a Camera," *The New Yorker*, April 12, 1969, 178.

<sup>60</sup> Rebecca R. Scott, *Removing Mountains: Extracting Nature and Identity in the Appalachian Coalfields*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 140.

<sup>61</sup> Scott, 141.

<sup>62</sup> Scott, 59.

<sup>63</sup> Felicity Barringer, "US Officials Confirm Miners Tried to Escape After Blast," *New York Times*, Jan 12, 2006 and Gary Gately, "West Virginia Miner Emerging from His Coma," *New York Times*, Jan 19, 2006.

<sup>64</sup> Mary Shaffer, phone call with the author, March 28, 2013.

<sup>65</sup> Mary Shaffer, phone call with the author, Dec 7, 2012.

<sup>66</sup> Everett Shaffer, personal interview with the author, July 27, 2012.

<sup>67</sup> Everett Shaffer, phone call with the author, Dec 7, 2012.

<sup>68</sup> E. Shaffer, Dec 7, 2012. The Beatty farm was the "500 acre farm" that was claimed by the Land Bank of Baltimore after his grandfather's foolish spending. The people living on the farm after the Beatty's, according to Pap, ruined the land by strip mining and cutting down all the timber. Jessie, Pap's mother, never forgave her husband or her father for losing that land.

<sup>69</sup> Michael D. Shear, "In Virginia, Romney Scours Coal Country for Edge Over Obama," *The New York Times*, October 26, 2012. Coal country was one of the most pro-Romney areas in the country, something that Romney utilized in his campaign. Because of Obama's pro-clean energy stance, the people of West Virginia and Kentucky believed that Romney would be the only candidate who would look after their interests.

<sup>70</sup> National Coal Heritage Area, "Welcome," Last modified 2013. Accessed Feb 27, 2013. <http://www.coalheritage.org/> and Scott, 144.

<sup>71</sup> Everett Shaffer, phone call with the author, Dec 7, 2012. Pap talked about how the coal now produced in Preston County is either sent to Morgantown, or sent to the East Coast and on to China for use in their growing industry.

<sup>72</sup> Barbara Kopple, *Harlan County USA*. Cabin Creek Films, DVD, 1976. Kopple's film, as mentioned, won the Academy Award for best documentary. Besides her intriguing subjects, *Harlan County USA* has become well known for its use of local music. Like many conflicts, one thing that the union/company coal wars produced was chilling and amazing protest songs. The Harlan County struggles produced a lot of ballads, including the infamous "Which side are you on?"

<sup>73</sup> Homer Hickam, *October Sky*, (New York, NY: Dell Publishing, 1998).

<sup>74</sup> Barret, 2000.

<sup>75</sup> Scott, 218. Scott describes how authors frequently use this term as a term designed to garner a response from people outside the region; implying that a "third world" right in their own country will guilt some Americans into action.

<sup>76</sup> Kopple, 1976.

<sup>77</sup> Kopple, 1976.

<sup>78</sup> Kopple, 1976.

<sup>79</sup> Oren Frederic Morton, *A History of Preston County, West Virginia*, (Kingwood: The Journal of Publishing Company, 1914) online. Pap lent me a book called *History of Preston County, West Virginia*, written by an ST Wiley in 1882. It does not mention anything about coal strikes (which makes sense in a history published so early).

<sup>80</sup> Hickam, 263.

<sup>81</sup> Hickam, 6, 64, and 363.

<sup>82</sup> Hickam, 9.

<sup>83</sup> Hickam, 14.

<sup>84</sup> Donald Edkins, *Edkins Catalogue of United States Coal Company Scrip Volume 2 West Virginia*. Huntington, West Virginia: The National Scrip Collectors Association. 2002. ASIN B0006E5ZQY. A few of the companies include the Kingwood Coal Co, Austen Coal & Coke, Albright Coal & Coke, Ruthbell Coal, Laurel Valley Coal, Gorman Coal and Coke, and Preston County Coal & Coke.

<sup>85</sup> Everett Shaffer, "Local Coal Mines," personal account, written over several years, given to author in January of 2013 and United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1940. T627, 4,643 rolls.

<sup>86</sup> Hickam, 6.

<sup>87</sup> Plaque found in author's grandparents' home, Terra Alta, Preston County, WV.

<sup>88</sup> United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1940, as found on ancestry.com.

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<sup>89</sup> Morton, 721.

<sup>90</sup>Anthony Harkins, *Hillbilly: A Cultural History of An American Icon*, (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). 178-179.

<sup>91</sup> Harkins, 180.

<sup>92</sup> Harkins, 187 and Paul Henning, "The Clampetts Strike Oil," *The Beverly Hillbillies*, Dec 18 2006, Web, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sBmYkXVteaU>

<sup>93</sup> Debra Granik, *Winter's Bone*, Anonymous Content, June 11 2010, DVD.

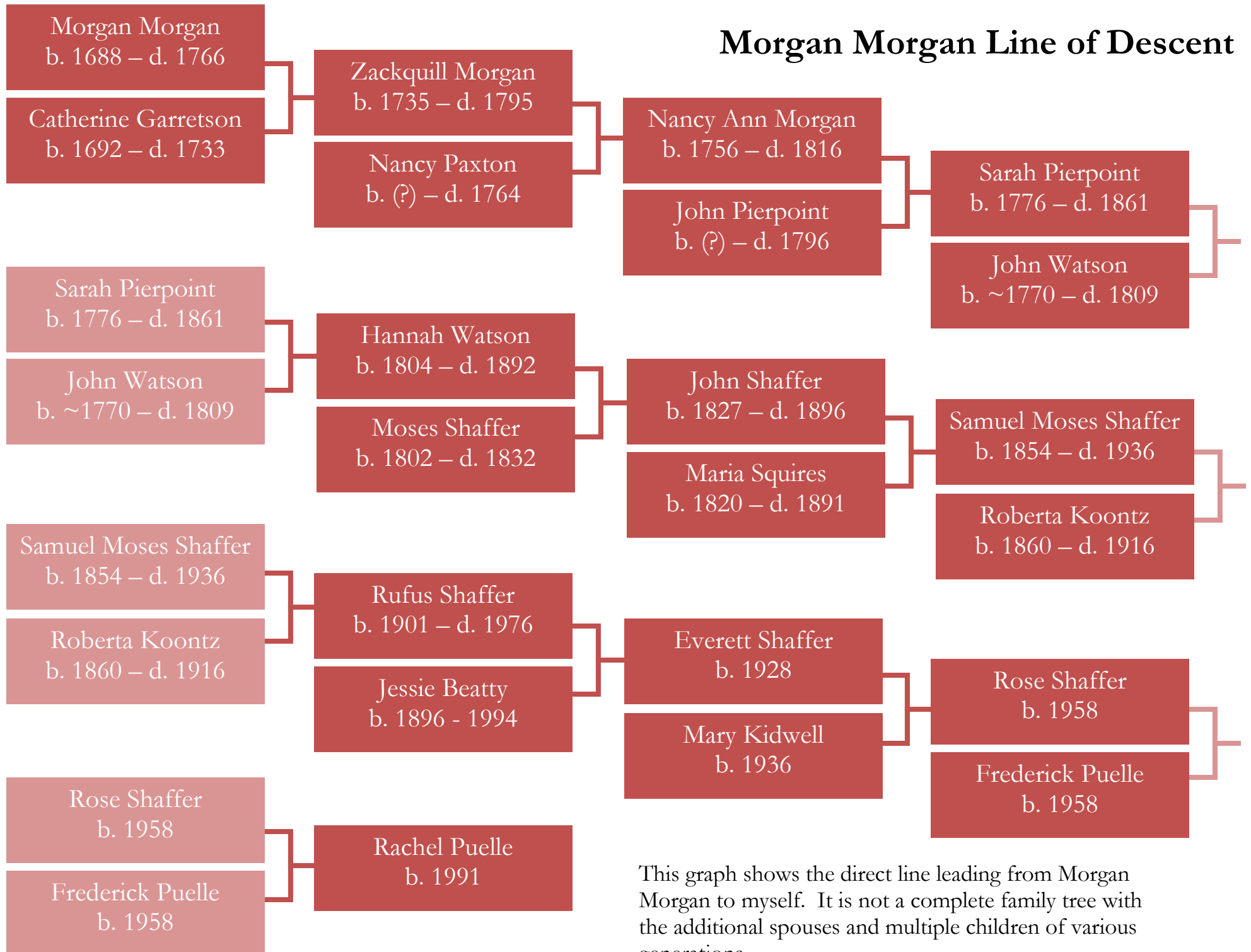
<sup>94</sup> FX Productions, *Justified*, premiered Jan 17, 2010, Television series, [http://www.imdb.com/media/rm899854592/tt1489428?ref\\_=tt\\_ov\\_i](http://www.imdb.com/media/rm899854592/tt1489428?ref_=tt_ov_i).

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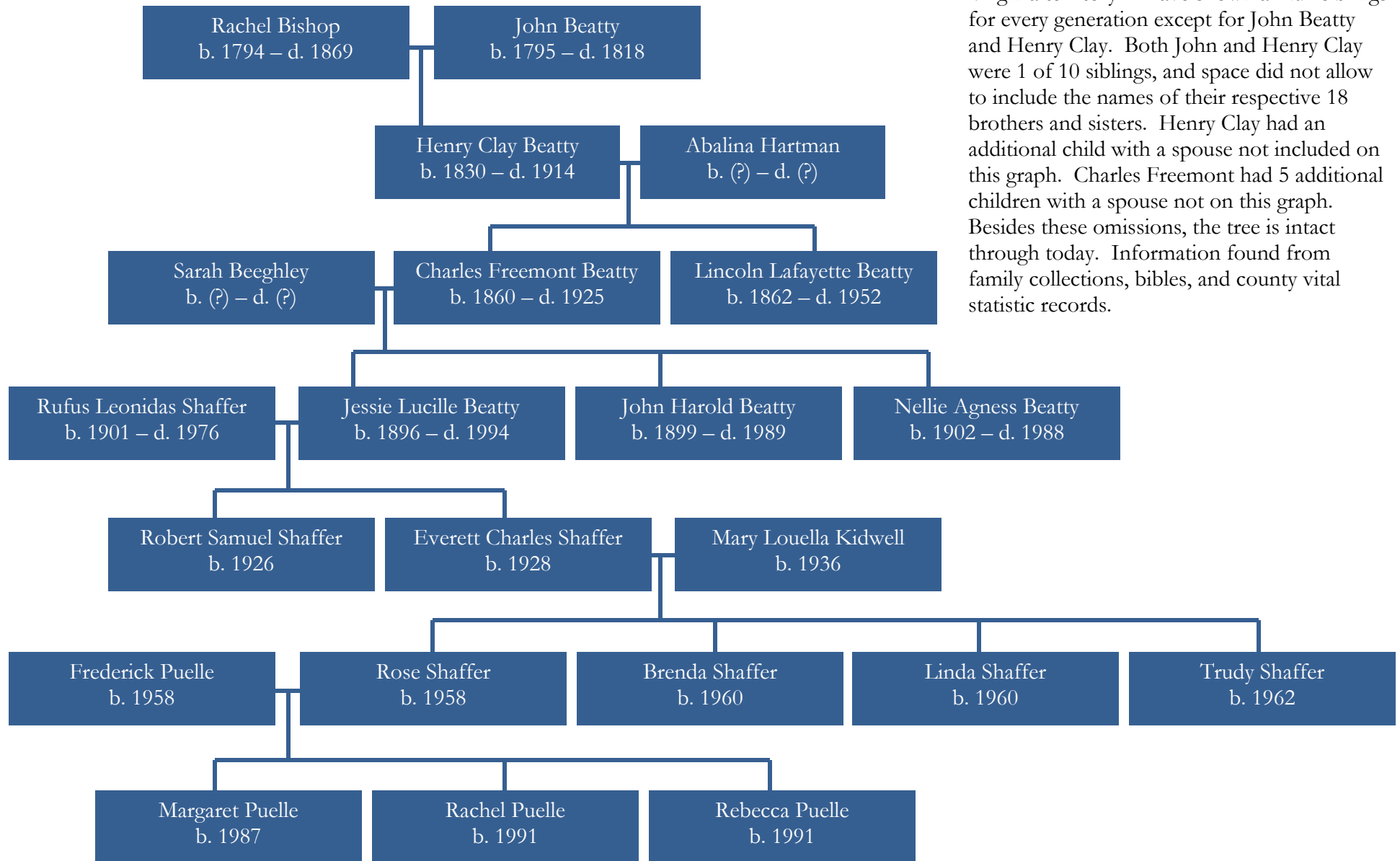
# Morgan Morgan Line of Descent



This graph shows the direct line leading from Morgan Morgan to myself. It is not a complete family tree with the additional spouses and multiple children of various generations.

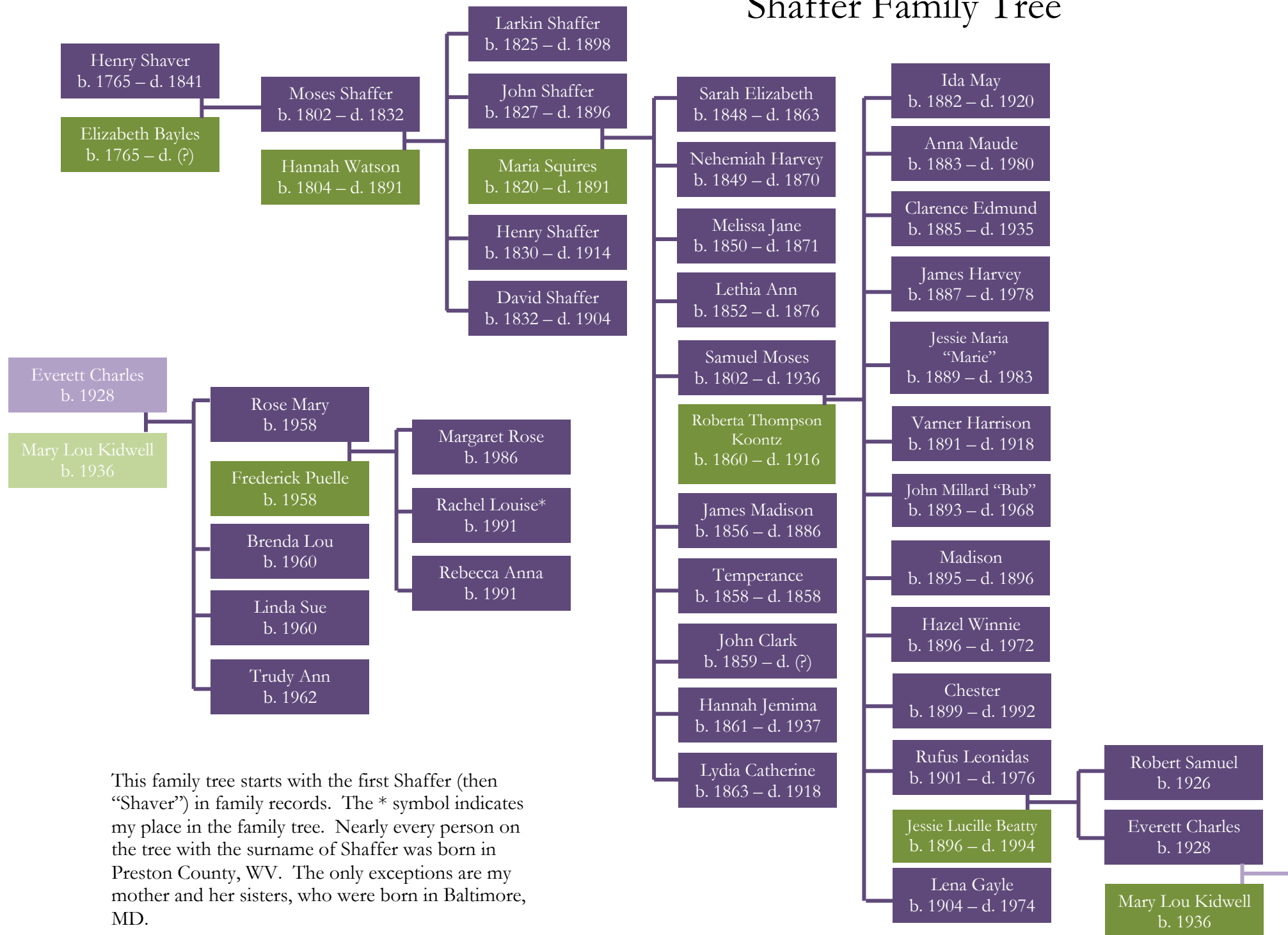


# Beatty/Shaffer Family Tree



I decided to begin this family tree with the first Beatty generation born in the Virginia/West Virginia territory. I have shown all full siblings for every generation except for John Beatty and Henry Clay. Both John and Henry Clay were 1 of 10 siblings, and space did not allow to include the names of their respective 18 brothers and sisters. Henry Clay had an additional child with a spouse not included on this graph. Charles Freemont had 5 additional children with a spouse not on this graph. Besides these omissions, the tree is intact through today. Information found from family collections, bibles, and county vital statistic records.

# Shaffer Family Tree



This family tree starts with the first Shaffer (then “Shaver”) in family records. The \* symbol indicates my place in the family tree. Nearly every person on the tree with the surname of Shaffer was born in Preston County, WV. The only exceptions are my mother and her sisters, who were born in Baltimore, MD.